

THE DAYS
OF DICKENS

ARTHUR L. HAYWARD

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THE DAYS OF DICKENS

PLATE I.



ROTTEN ROW AT SIX O'CLOCK ON A JUNE EVENING, 1851

THE DAYS OF DICKENS

A Glance at Some Aspects of
Early Victorian Life in London

BY

ARTHUR L. HAYWARD

AUTHOR OF "THE DICKENS ENCYCLOPÆDIA"

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*IN MEMORY
OF
MY FATHER AND MOTHER*

PREFACE

WHATEVER may be the legitimate scope of a preface I am using this to placate, so far as possible, any who may complain of the limitations of my book. To deal with every phase of a time so recent as to be within the memory of some now living would have been too vast an undertaking, so, from the first, I deliberately limited myself, as the sub-title announces, to certain aspects of early Victorian life in London, stretching that term to include the years between 1830 and the mid '60s.

Most books written about this period take the form of Reminiscences or Recollections and are accompanied by such comparisons as naturally suggest themselves to those who have watched our new world being born of the old. I have approached the subject frankly as one of a later generation and have refrained from drawing any morals or conclusions, attempting only to say something about that bygone life. In places I have quoted at some length from Dickens whose pictures of his time are, I think, more vivid than those of any of his contemporaries; but it would be impossible to enumerate the sources from which my medley of facts has been gleaned. They include newspapers, memoirs, diaries, commonplace books, casual references here, topical jokes there and throughout all the inexhaustible fund of Victorian odds and ends to be found in *The Illustrated London News* and *Punch*. Various scraps of information, too, have been gleaned orally from old friends who knew those days.

The illustrations have been selected rather to make a pictorial commentary on the period than to illustrate the text. I have not therefore devoted any space to familiar

subjects or the reproduction of famous pictures but have sought to give a selection of the more interesting contemporary cuts which can only be found in *The Illustrated London News*—whose proprietors I hereby thank for their courtesy in allowing me to reproduce them—and similar sources.

The original idea of this book was conceived some years ago when my intention was to write it round certain reminiscences to be dictated by my father whose recollections from the late '40s onward were very vivid ; but other work intervened and postponed the execution of this scheme until a book of notes and the random memories of casual conversations were all I had to help me.

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THE DAYS OF DICKENS

CHAPTER I

A LONDON MEDLEY

London in the '30s—Street Changes—Cheapside—Omnibuses and Cabs—Penny Steamers—Crinolines—Men's Modes—Whiskers and Beards—The Police—Postmen—Milkmen and Pot-boys—Street Amusements—Hawkers—Advertisements—Matches and Candles—Velocipedes—Early Photography—Newspapers—Cockney Slang—A Racy Tailor.

BARELY a hundred years have passed since Mr. Pickwick took a certain memorable cab ride from Goswell Street to Charing Cross, yet scarcely an object or a person that his genial eye rested upon would be familiar to anyone making the journey to-day. Buildings, streets, the people in the streets, all have changed. Waterman, cab-driver, hackney coachman, hot-pieman, Alfred Jingle, the "Commodore" coach—they belong to a bygone age which becomes every year harder to picture in our minds. More changes have taken place in the eighty-eight years—after all, but the span of one long life—that have elapsed since Queen Victoria ascended the throne than took place in the preceding three centuries. Machinery, education, electricity, travel, new ideals and a different outlook on life have, indeed, made the days of Dickens and Thackeray almost as remote as the days of the Stuarts.

The London of the '30s was roughly contained in the area circumscribed by Park Lane, Edgware Road, Regent's Canal, the Thames (looping in a fringe of houses and streets on the South side), Westminster Bridge, Pimlico and Hyde Park Corner; though for some miles out the main turnpike roads, between which lay fields, market gardens or arid wastes, were bordered with the houses of well-to-do City men. Primrose Hill stood in the quiet of the fields; Kilburn and its ancient Priory lay amid green meadows; the Westbourne

brook trickled through pleasant glades ; Kensal Green and Willesden Green were tiny hamlets ; Kentish Town and the two Holloways were straggling overgrown villages ; when Mrs. Nickleby retired to Bow it was a large village separated by great open spaces from Limehouse ; Stratford was merely a row of houses on each side of the Mile End Road. The whole metropolis contained some million and three quarter inhabitants.

In outward appearance London has undergone a transformation since those days, and the most radical of the changes have been made during the last few years. The topographical aspect has, however, been so exhaustively dealt with by so many writers that there is no occasion here, to do more than touch upon some of the most important street alterations.

Trafalgar Square had recently been made when Queen Victoria came to the throne, though the Nelson Column was not erected until some years later. Northumberland House, surmounted by the great lion which was one of London's landmarks, occupied the site commemorated by Northumberland Avenue ; farther along the Strand was Hungerford Market, later pulled down to make room for Charing Cross Station. Holywell Street, Wych Street and the dirty purlieus of Drury Lane lay to the north of the Strand, between Wellington Street and Clement's Inn ; just beyond the slum of Shire Lane, Clare Market and Bell Alley (all demolished when the Law Courts were built) Temple Bar marked the City boundary and a few yards within it old St. Dunstan's Church jutted out into Fleet Street, with its two giants striking the hours.

At the bottom of Fleet Street was Farringdon Market and the ugly old Fleet Prison. Beyond St. Paul's and south of Cheapside lay the maze of small streets and alleys later to be cut through by the extension of Cannon Street and Queen Victoria Street. The year after the Queen's accession the Royal Exchange, which faced Cornhill, was burned to the ground, while its chimes rang out " There's nae luck aboot the hoose ; " in erecting the new Exchange, with its columned façade facing the Mansion House, considerable street alterations were made.

A few yards from the grim walls of Newgate, Skinner Street and Snow Hill descended in a sharp gradient to Farringdon

Street where they met Holborn Hill, which was so steep that spare horses were always kept in readiness to help omnibuses and heavy carts to climb the slope; Holborn Viaduct now spans the whole valley.

Furnival's Inn stood on the site now occupied by the Prudential Insurance Company; beyond it was Middle Row in Holborn; yet farther, now incorporated in Southampton Row, was Kingsgate Street, the residence of Mrs. Gamp.

Before New Oxford Street was cut through in the mid '40s, the main thoroughfare from East to West followed the line of Holborn, Broad Street and High Street, passing the parish church and skirting the dreadful Rookery of St. Giles.

Leicester Square was a waste of brickbats, bordered on the north by a maze of narrow streets of dubious reputation, since traversed by Shaftesbury Avenue, Piccadilly Circus—or Regent's Circus as it was then called—was spoiled by a block of houses in the centre. The Quadrant was, until 1848, adorned with a portico on either side, frequented by shady characters of both sexes. At one time fair man-huntresses of French origin reserved to themselves the right hand side and with great determination, often accompanied by violence, resisted any trespassing on their preserves by poachers of other nationalities from the opposite pavement. Porticoes and houses alike have disappeared.

The London streets were noisy to an extent it is now difficult to appreciate. They were paved with rough granite blocks—wood-paving was tried in Cheapside and given up as a failure—upon which the innumerable hoofs, combined with the broad iron tires of heavy drays, omnibuses and carts to keep up an unending clatter and rattle. Regulation of traffic was little attended to, stoppages and entanglements were common and when they occurred aroused a perfect babel of shouts and yells from drivers. Short stage-coaches were furnished with horns, omnibus drivers and cads kept up a continuous and loudly-bawled litany of the places to which they were going; innumerable street-vendors, musicians, ballad-singers and the like did their utmost to be heard above the din.

Here is a vivid picture of the streets in the mid '40s. "The whole of Cheapside is alive with cabs, carts, chariots,

omnibuses, drays, waggons and trucks, the latter of which are often drawn by boys, and we marvel that they are not flattened amid the crowded ranks of vehicles, which form one continuous chain as far as the eye can penetrate. The splendid shops must strike a stranger with amazement, although far inferior to many which have lately been built at 'the West End.' Let the uninitiated be careful how they stand, whilst loitering and looking in through those costly plate-glass windows upon such gorgeous productions, for, upward and downward, all day long, the rapid current of human life is ever rolling in living eddies, from east to west, and jostling, in its mighty strength, every idle object it meets with on its way. You see the ruddy-faced, top-booted countryman, waiting patiently to cross the street, and marvelling in his own mind what strange procession it can be, that is made up of such a long train of all varieties of vehicles? The porter with his load runs against the 'Exquisite' in full dress, and disarranges either his carefully twirled ringlets, or jauntily-set hat; a curse or a growl is exchanged on both sides, and they again pass on. The dandy goes by, brandishing his light cane, followed by the stout and sturdy citizen, the very tapping of whose heavy stick denotes him to be a man of substance; while the broad-built country bumpkin, with a fair cousin on each arm, occupies the whole breadth of the footway, and seems astonished at the rudeness of the 'Lunnuners,' who either jeer him as they pass, or are ever driving the red elbows of Nanny or Betty into his sides.

"All at once there is a stoppage! some heavily-laden waggon has broken down, and the long line of carriages of every description are suddenly brought to a stand still—all are motionless. You see the old thoroughbred London cabman, who has promised to take his fare either east or west, as the matter may be, in a given number of minutes—dodge in and out for a few seconds, through such narrow openings as no one, excepting a real Jehu, born on the stand, would ever venture to move in, until he comes to the entrance of some narrow street, the inns and outs of which are only known to a few like himself, when, crack, bang, and he has vanished, giving one of his own peculiar leers at parting, at the long line he has left stationary. Now there is a slow movement, and the procession proceeds at a funeral pace.

The donkey-cart, laden with firewood, heralds the way, and is followed by the beautiful carriage with its armorial bearings. Behind comes the heavy dray, with its load of beer-barrels; the snail-paced omnibus follows; the high-piled waggon, that rocks and reels beneath its heavy load, next succeeds, and you marvel that it does not topple over, extinguish some dozen or so of foot passengers, and smash in the gorgeous shop front.

“In rainy weather Londoners live and move under umbrellas. Only stand at the top of Ludgate-hill on a rainy day, and you will see each side of the street lined with umbrellas. Up and down they move in regular succession; there they are of all sizes, prices, and qualities; silk, cotton and oilskin. Meantime, cabs and omnibuses roll along, and splash the passers-by, gratis, and sometimes a stone that is not properly placed, lies like a trap, and juts up a fountain of liquid mud, on the first unwary passenger that chances to plant his foot upon it.”

It was not until the '50s, that plate-glass began to be used extensively for shop windows in place of small panes of ordinary and often inferior glass, and the art—or is it a science?—of window-dressing was unknown. One of the pioneers in this, as in advertisement of every form, was the great tailoring house of Moses, of Aldgate and Holborn, whose brilliantly illuminated shopwindows, sandwich-men, and rhymed advertisements in every newspaper were notorious throughout London.

According to Max Schlesinger, the German foreign correspondent, “Among the middle classes of London the omnibus stands immediately after air, tea, and flannel in the list of necessities of life.” Introduced in 1829, within a very few years these conveyances had, indeed, become so indispensable that services were run to all parts of the metropolis and suburbs, conveying daily great numbers of people.

The early omnibus was a sort of oblong, rectangular box, with windows at the sides and a large window in the door at the back. The conductor, or “cad” as he was usually called, stood outside on a small step to the left of the door, steadying himself in this precarious position by means of a leather strap fastened to the roof. The vehicle was painted

in some bright and distinctive colour, with its final destination in large gold letters on the side. Thus there were Bayswaters, Richmonds, Chelseas, Putneys and Hammersmiths, each with its own hue; other buses had fancy names, such as Waterloo, Nelson, Wellington, Taglioni, Atlas. In addition to this inscription there were notices of all the principal streets near which the route passed—a confusing display for those unaccustomed to the town.

There were, at first, no outside seats, but later the knife board, a long bench running the length of the vehicle, was introduced and was reached by means of a number of iron rings on the back of the bus. There were two box seats, one each side of the driver. Within, the bus was stuffy and cramped, the floor being covered with straw which was more often than not mouldy, while, whatever the Law might say, the cad crammed in as many passengers as it would hold. There were no tickets, fares were paid on alighting, and as each driver and conductor had a personal share in the takings there was the utmost competition with other buses to secure passengers.

The driver was a man of some appearance—"with a white opera hat, a blue and white-spotted cravat with a corresponding display of very clean shirt collar, coat of dark green cloth, trousers and waistcoat of some fancy pattern; his boots well polished, his whiskers well-kept and respectable, smoking a fragrant cigar and wearing a white rose in his buttonhole." When the cad gave the stunning blow with his fist on the top of the bus which corresponded to the bell of present times, the driver would whip his horses into a brisk pace and thread his way through the traffic with wonderful skill.

Cabriolets were two-wheeled vehicles with room for a couple of passengers, rather cramped, with the driver sitting on a little ledge alongside so that, as in Mr. Pickwick's first adventure, conversation with his fares was possible. When the hansom-cab was invented the driver was relegated to a perch behind. Hackney-coaches were usually down-at-heels private carriages, drawn by a pair of equally worn-out horses and patronised by family parties, old ladies, and travellers encumbered with luggage. It may be observed that in 1847 a patent was taken out for a "Mile Index" to

register the distance covered by a cab between any two places and thus protect the fare from overcharge. This early form of taximeter was never adopted in practice, however.

Attached to every cab-rank was a waterman. "This creature," according to Max S., "appears generally in the shape of a dirty, grey and toothless old man who cleans the cabs, minds the horses, attended to the orders of the passengers, opens and shuts the doors and fetches and carries to the cabstand everything his masters want, in consideration of which he is entitled to the gratuity of one penny for each fare, and manages to get another penny from the fare as a reward for the alacrity and politeness with which he opens the door." For many years old Joe Arnold—"Thirsty Joe," he was called—was a well-known waterman on the Piccadilly cab-rank. When he was well over seventy he thought nothing of knocking down an "obstropulous" cabby or a pugnacious fare.

Anyone wishing to travel East or West found the Thames an exceedingly convenient, though malodorous, highway. Before the Embankment was made a number of stairs led down to the water's edge where small row-boats were always waiting to be hired; while a regular steamer service plied between the wharves on either shore from Battersea to Greenwich. The River was, indeed, crowded with paddle-steamers on which fares varied from a penny to three pence. Three lines of boats ran above London Bridge and two below it, their point of meeting being Old Swan Pier. Most of this fleet belonged to the Citizen Line whose boats were named alphabetically, beginning with "Citizen A." The Iron Boats Company's steamers were called after the City Livery Companies; the Westminster Steamboat Company christened their vessels picturesquely after flowers. Most of these penny steamers had cabins for first and second-class passengers and a refreshment bar for general use.

At one time there were "Halfpenny Steamers" running between London Bridge and Hungerford Pier, but a frightful accident in 1847 ruined the company that owned them. While the "Cricket" was lying off Adelphi Pier, on the morning of August the 28th, with some 150 passengers aboard just embarked for London Bridge, the boiler blew up, killing five persons outright and seriously injuring some fifty

others. All three vessels belonging to the company had been condemned as unsafe by a marine engineer some six months earlier.

The costume of early Victorian days is fairly familiar to the present generation, though it must not be imagined that all classes wore the rather elegant creations with which certain plays have made us familiar. I have tried to illustrate a few of the ever-changing fashions in the plates. The crinoline, with which the period is so closely identified, made its first appearance in 1856, though it had not long been preceded by dresses adorned with innumerable flounces. To the no small discomfort of the world at large, crinolines continued to increase in size until the mid '60s. Held out on whalebone ribs kept apart by wires or inflated tubes, these enormous skirts often measured more than six yards in circumference and it may be imagined what confusion they caused in crowded streets, public vehicles or thronged assemblies. They were at their height—or girth—in 1867, and soon afterwards the fashion changed. Crinoline skirts were very becoming, however, and certainly developed a graceful carriage in their wearers. It was not possible to slouch or ape the opposite sex when wearing a crinoline.

Here is an extract from a poetical advertisement of the time :

JUNO AND VENUS AT LUNCHEON WITH PALLAS

“ Said Juno, ‘ Go to Earth, my Iris, and discover
 (I leave the method in detail to you)
 By what mode mortal maidens gain a lover,
 By what art matrons keep their husbands true.’
 ‘ How odd ! ’ said Venus, ‘ then I’m not so stupid ;
 I said the very same to my page, Cupid.’ ”

Iris goes to earth and on her return tells how she met a man who said she should go to the city :

“ I thank’d him for his very kind suggestion,
 And straight proceeded to the place he named ;
 But when I came and ’gan to ask my question,
 I felt a little shy and half ashamed,
 Till some one said, ‘ We know, Miss, what you mean :
 Behold the mystery !—THOMSON’S CRINOLINE ! ’

.



The Promenade in Kensington Gardens
on a Band Day

From a drawing by Walter Crane



A Young Lady's New Year Dream of
Beaux and Wedding Bells



Mayfair drives to Epsom, ladies and their
squires on the way to the Derby

Walter Crane

“ ‘ Enough ! ’ said Juno, ‘ you have done your duty ;
 That must be right in which you’re all agreed ;
 I’m sure you’ve found the recipe for beauty,
 And that, you know, ’s exactly what we need.
 Come, Venus, you may give your maid your cestus,
 For Crinoline in future will invest us.

“ ‘ Therefore, good Iris, go at once and bring
 Some specimens of this invention curious,
 And mind you get the veritable thing,
 Beware, my dear, of imitations spurious ;
 I’ll not stir out (at least I’ll not be seen)
 Until I get a Thomson’s Crinoline ! ’ ”

Before crinolines reached their limit it was the customary thing for any gentleman who had occasion to accompany a lady to offer her his arm, which she took, as a matter of course. But the exorbitant skirts killed this pleasant fashion quite as effectually as the “ gents ” who affected an easy familiarity by sticking out an elbow and offering “ a fin.”

Girls treasured their natural complexions too much to use powder or rouge and the whole trend of Fashion was to protect the face from the weather. Bonnets and hats were worn with veils and, at one time, had a curious kind of shade hanging in front called an Ugly, which served to keep the Sun’s rays from the wearer’s forehead. Parasols of all sizes and patterns were carried, often made with a joint in the stick so that the umbrella part could be turned to any angle desired. Fashion in hairdressing hardly changed throughout the whole period, the hair either being parted in the middle and looped down over the ears, or worn in innumerable ringlets.

So far as men were concerned the modes altered but slightly. Some old gentlemen continued to wear knee breeches until well into the new Queen’s reign, but the pantaloons introduced in the late 18th century were in common use until the Crimean War. These tight-fitting garments were strapped under the ankles to keep them rigid. Trousers went through various stages of tightness, breadth and shape, but were usually full and loose hanging, without any vestige of crease. Dresscoats, of much the same cut as now worn, were often adorned with brass buttons, sometimes of a fancy pattern, as the famous button of the Pickwick Club.

Fashionable morning-wear about the end of the '40s was a blue frock coat and white pantaloons. In cold weather a Taglioni overcoat, rather a shapeless garment, or a heavy Petersham served to keep the wearer warm. The Crimean War introduced all sorts of fashions in the way of fur collars, Balaklava wrappers, Alma overcoats and the like.

Top hats, commonly known as "chimney-pots" or "tiles" came into general fashion in the '30s and for many years were in almost universal use. Steeple-jacks and sewer-men, crossing-sweepers and road-menders, cricketers and athletic champions, all went about their work or sport in a tall hat. Busy men carried their documents, doctors their instruments, and most people their handkerchiefs, in the spacious cylinder.

Skilled artisans such as weavers, printers, carpenters and painters, wore square paper caps which they folded themselves. Being easily renewed, they were clean and serviceable. This paper cap was the sign of skilled labour; navvies and other labourers wore tall hats, and breeches instead of trousers.

The clean-shaven chins of the Georgians were succeeded by whiskers, and sometimes small moustaches and tufts of hair on the chin. It was not until the '50s that what *Punch* called "The Moustache Movement" took place; after that, the heavy beards grown by our men in the Crimea set a fashion of hairiness at home, and for the next ten years or so heavily-whiskered faces were the mode. Long after the full beard had gone out whiskers remained in fashion—in extreme cases the "Piccadilly Weepers" of Lord Dundreary's day. At one period of the '60s it was a fashion with the "swells" to die their hair and whiskers white, giving an effect of premature old age. Pointed collars with only the tips appearing above the stock, were in use until the '50s when higher collars began to come into fashion, worn with large, flourishing bows. Collars were tied behind with a tape and had no fastening in front.

Until well on into the '60s the police wore top hats of varnished leather, exceedingly hot and uncomfortable, but rather better protection than helmets. Their uniform was of the same dark blue as to-day, though the coat was bob-tailed, trimmed with brass buttons and fitted with a high

stiff collar. Truncheons were carried more conspicuously, and instead of a whistle the night constable slipped a rattle into his belt, which made a very distinctive and penetrating noise.

There were two kinds of postmen in London, the General who delivered letters from all parts of the country, and the Twopenny Postman, who had only to do with local matter. Both wore much the same style of uniform—a scarlet coat and shining top-hat adorned with a gold band.

Before the introduction of the prepaid penny post and adhesive stamps, postage was usually collected on delivery. In 1830 the letter rates were 4d. for 15 miles, 5d. for 20 miles and thence according to a sliding scale to 1s. for a limit of 300 miles. A letter from London to Liverpool cost 11d.; to Bristol, 10d.; to Aberdeen, 1s. 3d.; to Glasgow, 1s. 2d.; to Cork, 1s. 5d. Packages weighing an ounce paid four times the ordinary rate, and for every quarter of an ounce in excess an additional sum was charged.

The Twopenny Post served London and its suburbs. There were six collections and deliveries daily in London and three in the suburbs, letters being posted at various receiving offices during the daytime while the last collection was made by a postman who went through the streets ringing a bell. Pillar-boxes were not in use until many years later.

The use of envelopes in correspondence was not general until well into the '60s, most people preferring the old fashion of folding over the sheet of paper and fastening the flaps with a wafer—a little disc of gum and flour which was moistened and pressed down with a seal. Quill pens were used long after steel nibs had been introduced. Quills soon lost their point and needed cutting with a sharp pen-knife (hence the name), so the art of cutting a nib was one of the first things taught at school.

It was a common thing for the London housewife to send her joints, pies and tarts to be cooked at the nearest baker's shop, most of which were open on Sunday morning. Milk was delivered from door to door by white-smocked milkmen who carried a couple of large pails, bedecked with pint and half-pint measures, on wooden yokes across their shoulders. Another public benefactor was the potman who brought beer or stout round to the door from the nearest public-house.

A cheerless generation has made this illegal, but in those more genial days, every public-house was allowed to sell malt-liquor off the premises and the supper beer or ale for Sunday's dinner was always delivered by a white-coated potman with his large tray full of foaming pint pots.

The Muffin-and-Crumpet-man is still with us, though in diminished numbers, but he was a feature of the streets some eighty years ago. His bell, not to be confused with that of the leather-hatted dustman, sounded pleasantly as dusk was falling in London streets and squares. There, too, might be heard the shrill whistle of the baked-potato man, or, at the corner outside the public-house, the pieman's cry of "Here's all 'ot! Toss or buy! Up and win 'em!" Tossing the pieman was a favourite pastime with street lads. The customer spun the coin, and the pieman called to him; if the latter won he received a penny and gave no pie, if he lost he gave a pie for nothing. For further particulars of the pieman's versatility I refer my readers to Sam Weller's account of his friend, Mr. Brooks—"Regl'ar clever chap—make pies out o' anything, he could."

Even in the best streets there were hawkers innumerable. Watercress sellers, cats'-meat men, broom-vendors, lavender-girls, all raised their voices to be heard above the rattle of iron tires on the stone-paved streets. Punch-and-Judy shows, Puppet-shows, tumblers, organ-grinders, protean bandsmen, ballad-singers with their yards of songs, all had full scope to perform where and when they liked, and children and idlers had infinite choice of diversion. Universal favourites were The Happy Family, a large cage on a barrow, containing a dog or two, a couple of cats, a rat or some mice, possibly a monkey and usually a few birds, which all consorted together amicably and performed sundry tricks; performing bears; the excitements of Jack-in-the-Green on May Day, when chimneysweeps made holiday; and once a year the fearful glories of Guy Fawkes, when that traitor, the Pope, Cardinal Wiseman or any other object of popular hatred was burned in effigy.

As darkness fell the lamplighter would appear, furnished with no long stick and light, but carrying a lamp and a short ladder on which he had to climb every post, to turn on the gas and light it.

Another bygone figure was the ticket-porter—Trotty Veck—who was licensed to carry parcels or letters and wore a little white apron as a badge of office. 'Change Alley, St. Michael's Alley, the Exchange, and Broad Street had stands for these messengers, but with the growth of large businesses regular men were employed, and the old casual messengers disappeared.

Street trade in the '50s was very extensive and widely spread. Henry Mayhew has tabulated and analysed it exhaustively, and some idea of its variety may be gleaned from the businesses in one section of the trade alone, that is the Street Sellers of Eatables and Drinkables. Fried Fish, hot eels, pickled whelks, sheeps' trotters, ham sandwiches, pea-soup, hot green-peas, penny pies, plum-duff, meat-puddings, baked-potatoes, spice-cakes, muffins and crumpets, Chelsea-buns, sweetmeats, brandy-balls, cough-drops, cats' and dogs' meat were the principal eatables sold, each by its own particular vendors; while among drinkables were tea and coffee, ginger-beer, lemonade, hot wine, new milk fresh from the cow, asses' milk, curds and whey and plain—though not particularly pure—water.

Features of all the main thoroughfares were the curious advertising devices employed by go-ahead tradesmen. The sandwich-man was then in his prime, but far more striking devices were employed by those who could afford the expense:

"Behold, rolling down from Oxford Street," writes a foreign visitor in 1853, "three immense pyramids—their outsides are painted all over with hieroglyphics and monumental letters in English. These pyramids display faithful portraits of Isis and Osiris, of cats, storks and Apis; and amidst these gods, is an inscription printed in letters a yard long, announcing that there is now on view a superb panorama of Egypt. Then comes a huge mosque, its cupola white and blue, surmounted by the Crescent and driven by a sooty-faced boy. It is a quack doctor's advertisement of a nostrum—a panacea. Vauxhall sends round a chariot drawn by cream horses and heralded by trumpets and drums; the clown of Astley's drives through the streets in all sorts of quaint costumes, even the arches of the bridges over the Thames are painted with advertisements."

It is difficult to realise how modern are some of the con-

veniences of everyday, domestic life. It was not until 1855 that Bryant and May introduced the first safety-match in place of the "Lucifer" which had been in use for many years. The Lucifer, which was struck on sandpaper, was itself a vast improvement on the "Congreve" or "Congry", a very smelly and highly dangerous match which was ignited by the slightest friction. Candles were largely used for domestic lighting until the '60s, for gas was only laid on to better-class houses and even then was rather an odorous luxury, while the sperm oil used for lamps (paraffin oil being unknown) was not a very brilliant illuminant. Candles were made of yellow tallow with inferior wicks which required constant snuffing. Rushlights and farthing dips were used by the poor or employed in a perforated shade as nightlights: "She had brought a rushlight and shade with her, which, with praiseworthy precaution against fire, she had stationed in a basin on the floor, where it was glimmering away, like a gigantic light-house in a particularly small piece of water."—(*Pickwick*, 22.)

Forefather of the bicycle was the iron-tired, four-wheeled Velocipede that made its first appearance about 1860. Venturesome folk could hire one for a ride at the Crystal Palace and other places of popular resort, but it required a lot of energy to ride and though a speed of nine miles an hour might be obtained it never really "took on", any more than the various forerunners of the automobile—steam-cars which inventors and cranks brought out on the streets, to the great terror alike of horses and pedestrians.

Daguerreotypes were first seen in 1839. In these early photographs, the picture was produced by exposing a treated plate in the camera. This gave one very beautiful positive, but it was not until Fox Talbot introduced various improvements with his calotype process that negatives could be made and a number of prints taken. Something of the enthusiastic reception of the first photographs is reflected in the following Lines Written on Seeing a Daguerreotype Portrait of a Lady:

"Wondrous it is! form, face and air,
Dress, attitude, are pictured there!
Nay, pictured not—why Prate of Art
Where Nature, only plays the part?
No gifted touch could this excel;
No pencil breathe so sweet a spell!

Not *Reynolds*, in his 'noon of fame,'
Could put this magic head to shame,
Nor with the splendour of his hues,
O'er canvas, worthier traits diffuse ;
Nor one with chalk, and ductile oil
And varied tints and patient toil,
Could in veracity surpass
A portrait truer than the glass."

There is certainly a softness and delicacy about those early portraits which compensates for the stiffness of the posture—a stiffness not to be wondered at when it is recollected that the sitter had his head held in a rest and had to remain motionless during an exposure lasting many seconds, his whole body and expression petrified into a dignified pose appropriate to the occasion.

In 1830 there were seven morning newspapers: *The Times*, *Morning Chronicle*, *Morning Post*, *Morning Herald*, *Morning Advertiser*, *Morning Journal* and the *Public Ledger*. The evening papers were the *British Traveller*, *Courier*, *Globe*, *Standard*, *Star* and *Sun*. On Sundays appeared the *Age*, *Atlas*, *Bell's Messenger*, *Bell's Life in London*, *Dispatch*, *Englishman*, *Examiner*, *John Bull*, *News*, *Observer*, *Sphynæ*, *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Monitor*, *Weekly Register*, *Weekly Times*. In 1842 a great innovation was accomplished with the issue of a weekly newspaper with good pictures; this was *The Illustrated London News*. The early numbers of this invaluable weekly furnish a unique mine of material for the history of England from the date of its first number. Equally instructive from another point of view is *Punch* whose first number appeared on July 17, 1841.

Until 1853 a duty was charged on advertisements in newspapers of 1s. 6d. each; and from 1836 until its abolition in 1855 there was a newspaper tax of one penny on each copy of the paper and it was a misdemeanour to lend a newspaper to anyone else, as this constituted a fraud upon the Revenue. Small shopkeepers who were in the habit of allowing clients to read the papers in their shops for a penny a day, found themselves liable to heavy penalties.

No London medley would be complete without some mention of the slang so characteristic of Cockneys. It is strange that the interchangeable "w" and "v", immortalised by the Wellers has disappeared, for it would seem to have been

as innate as the uncertainty about "h's"—an uncertainty, by the way, which is more general in North Countrymen than in Londoners. Mrs. Gamp's favourite substitution of "g" for "z" when she was "so disposed" is still occasionally heard—at least some time ago, I heard a Brixton charwoman say that she had "sneeged" three times. But schools and newspapers have done away with most of the old colloquialisms, including the much used sarcastic negatives peculiar to Cockneys. It is interesting to note that Sam Weller made use of the modern catch-phrase "*I don't think!*" —(*Pickwick*, 38.)

The actual slang of Early Victorian days has, to a certain extent, been killed by the importation of strange words and crooked manners of speech from America. It was living and vigorous in its day, however, and deserves more attention than has been paid to it.

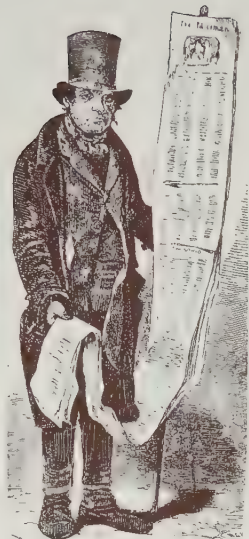
Extraordinary facility was acquired by the coster class in the use of back-slang, which consisted in pronouncing a word backwards. This back-slang language, according to one of Mayhew's informants, nonplussed the police, confused the Jews and was absolutely unintelligible to the Irish who, at that time, flocked to this country in swarms of the most degraded and undesirable folk imaginable.

"Yenep", a penny; "Owt yenep," two pennies; "On," no; "Say," yes; "Cool the nameslop," look! the policeman—such are fair examples of the back slang current among less respectable people of the street. "Slop" is still used to designate a policeman (police pronounced backward being "silop.")

More picturesque but scarcely more intelligible was Rhyming slang which is practically extinct. This originated with what Hotten calls "the fraternity of vagabonds, street ballad-singers, cheap jacks and so forth"—all men of slightly better education than the average costermonger. Rhyming slang commended itself to the would-be flash young men and became very general in sporting circles. It consisted simply in using some other word or phrase rhyming with what it was desired to convey, and although the choice of the slang word rested with the speaker, there were certain conventional forms always to be observed, such as, "Jimmy Skinner," dinner; "Apples and pears," stairs; "Battle of the Nile,"



"Baked 'taters! All 'ot!
all 'ot!"



"Beautiful songs! Three
yards a penny!"



"Dog collar! All brass,
a bob apiece!"



"Penny a lot, Oysters! Penny a lot!"



"Apples! A penny and an 'a'penny, Apples!"

IN LONDON STREETS

From Mayhew's *London Labour*

tile (itself a slang word for hat); "Elephant's trunk," drunk; "Epsom races," a pair of braces; "over the stile," sent for trial. A further complication was occasioned by the speakers usually omitting the last or actually rhyming word, the examples given above thus being abbreviated to "Jimmy"; "apples"; "battle"; "Elephant's"; etc. "Tom's gone up apples"; "Give me your battle"; "He was elephants right enough," and so forth.

Of a like poetical nature was the slang, much employed by Dick Swiveller, who loved to use portions of poetical phrases: "A wink of the balmy" (sleep); "Pass me the rosy" (wine); "To cross the ruby" (an adaptation of crossing the Rubicon and meaning to have one glass too many).

There were, too, catch phrases which enjoyed much the same vogue in their day as those with which Mr. George Robey has since enriched our speech. It would be wearisome, even if it were possible, to give a complete list, but a few which are almost classical deserve mention. "Walker! Hookey Walker!" and "All my Eye and Betty Martin" both expressed incredulity. "Ferguson!" was a curious slang term, presumably from a play, used in the sense, "It's all very well, Mr. Ferguson, but you can't come here, or you mustn't do that." Young swells, when "run in" for some practical joke or the like, commonly gave their name to the magistrate as "Ferguson." "Does your Mother know you're out?"; "Who's your hatter?" and "How's your poor feet?" originated in popular songs and, shouted by cheeky urchins, were very effective in lowering the dignity of a passing "swell."

"I believe you my bo-o-oy!" was an immensely popular catch-phrase originated by Paul Bedford, who used to utter it with his inimitable chuckle when playing in "Green Bushes." "Do you see any green in my eye?" (accompanied by an appropriate pulling down of the lid) meant, do you think me a fool? "To cut your lucky," was to make an escape. "The Boy Jones," for some years the synonym for a spy, alluded to a chimney-sweep named Jones who descended a chimney in Buckingham Palace and professed to have concealed himself in the royal apartments where he heard private conversations between the Queen and her husband. "Cold with——," "Hot with——," "Cold with-

out——,” were all drink phrases, the unspoken word being “sugar.”

I will conclude this medley chapter with the advertisement of a Whitechapel tailor who describes himself as The Champion of England SLAP-UP-TOG and Out and Out KICKSIES BUILDER :

“Mr H. nabs the chance of putting his customers awake that he has been able to put his mawleys on some of the right sort of stuff. One of the top manufacturers of Manchester has cut his lucky leaving behind him a valuable stock of Moleskins etc. Mr H. having some ready in his kick,* grabbed the chance, stepped home with the swag, and is now safe in his crib. He can turn out Toggery very slap, at the following Low Prices for

READY GILT—TICK BEING NO GO.

Upper Benjamins,† built on a downy plan, a monarch to half-finnuf.‡ Fishing, Shooting or Business Togs, cut slap one pound, one quarter and a peg. Lounging Togs at any price you like. A Fancy sleeve blue Plush or Pilot, ditto made very saucy, a couter§ Pair of Kersey-mere or Doeskin Kicksies, cut to drop down over the trotters; Bedford Cords cut very slap with the artful dodge, a canary.|| Pair of Out and Out Cords, built very serious, from six bob and a kick upwards. Pair of Moleskins, any colour, built hanky spanky, with a double fakement down the sides, and artful buttons at the bottom, half a monarch.

MUD PIES, KNEE CAPS AND TROTTER CASES BUILT VERY LOW.

A decent allowance made to Seedy Swells, Tea Kettle Purgers, Quill Drivers, Counter Jumpers, Head Robbers, and Flunkeys out of Collar.”

* Pocket.

† A long jacket or overcoat cut to fit the figure.

‡ Half a £5 note, *i.e.* £2, 10s.

§ Sovereign.

|| Sovereign.

CHAPTER II

THE UPPER TEN

Almack's—Its Autocratic Patronesses—The Height of Fashion—Dances—London Clubs—White's—Club Life—Dinners—Smoking—Society at Home—Its Carriages—Aloofness of the Upper Ten—The Turf—Derby Day Crowds—Lord Hastings—A Wild Set—Boxers—A Digression on the Ring—Sayers and Heenan Fight—The Eglinton Tournament—Holland House—Lady Blessington—D'Orsay—The Literary Circle—Carlyle on the Dandy.

“**T**O throw wide the door of Almack's is to put the crowning fiat upon the opening of the London Season; to be accepted by its Patronesses is to bask in the very glow of fashionable sunshine; to be the *habitué* of the brilliant *salons* is to be *par excellence* of the *haut monde*—to be excluded is to expire on the threshold of *ton* and be driven to the company of less *recherché* haunts.” In these words a newspaper of the early '40s announced the opening ball of the London Season.

Almack's Rooms in King Street, St. James's, dated from the middle of the 18th century and its magnificent ball-room, “chastely decorated with gilt columns and pilasters, classic medallions, mirrors, etc., and lit with gas in cut-glass lustres,” was, until the late '50s, the meeting-place of the most exclusive society in London, if not in Europe. The Assemblies were under the absolute control of six Patronesses whose decision as to who was, or who was not, to be admitted was final and admitted of no appeal. For the first four decades of the century an invitation to Almack's was, indeed, a passport to the very highest circles of Mayfair and was every whit equivalent to a presentation at Court.

Almack's Assembly Balls were held every Wednesday night during the Season. Application for a ticket had to be made in writing to one of the Patronesses—in the late '30s they were Lady Jersey, Lady Londonderry, Lady Cowper (who afterwards married Lord Palmerston), Lady Brownlow,

Lady Willoughby D'Eresby and Lady Euston—and the applicant was required to send a messenger for the ticket, or the dreaded refusal.

Trade of any sort was barred, to the third and fourth generation. A man either belonged to a good family or he did not, and in the latter event no efforts on his part could avail him. Almack's was at least candid in that it made no sort of pretension to admitting members according to merit. Generals, admirals, ambassadors or judges, no matter what their eminence, they and their wives and daughters had as little chance of ascending the throne as of ascending the stairs of Almack's, unless their blood was of the right shade of blue. As though to emphasise that mere wealth could procure no *entrée* to the Assembly Balls, the price of a ticket was only 7s. 6d.

The autocracy of the Patronesses was superb. Half the titled members of Society were refused admission through the sacred portals. At one time only half a dozen out of the three hundred odd officers of the Guards were received. The rules regulating dress and behaviour were conceived in the same spirit of exclusiveness. Captain Gronow relates that at one time the Patronesses issued a solemn proclamation to the effect that no gentleman should be admitted to the assemblies unless he had knee-breeches, white cravat and *chapeau bras*. One evening the Duke of Wellington appeared wearing black trousers and was about to ascend the grand staircase to the ball-room, when the vigilant and obsequious Willis, lessee of the rooms and major-domo of the Assembly, darted forward in horror, saying, "Your Grace cannot be admitted in trousers!" The Duke, knowing with whom he had to deal, turned away humbly and returned to Apsley House.

The Balls began at eleven o'clock. More than half of the glittering ball-room was partitioned off for the dancers with crimson ropes and in a gallery at one end was Weippert and Collinet's band, the best orchestra in London. As a "fashionable correspondent" wrote, in that society jargon Thackeray loved to pillory:

"The series of balls are, all *badinage* apart, of a most brilliant and *recherché* order. There is a pervading smile of triumph over the animated beauty of the assemblies which

seems to mock the disappointed ambition of the rejected of Almack's, and not less do its gallant frequenters of the devoted sex seem to glory in the sweet monopoly of loveliness which they there enjoy ! The air of exclusiveness, in a word, pervades all ; and there is an unmistakable freemasonry in its exercise which is interchanged with most delicious ease. Of course the leading rank of the nobility is there, and there is nothing plebeian in the atmosphere. Costume, manners, Terpsichorean *pas* and graces, gallopade, cotillon, mazourka—all are elegant alike. Exquisite beauty, lively wit, *beau-ideal* fashion, all sparkle in turn ; but the brilliancy is one of repose, dazzling certainly, but full of *sang-froid* and paradoxical, because both animated and *nonchalant*."

It was at Almack's that the waltz and quadrille made their first appearance in England, about the gala year of 1815. Lady Jersey introduced the latter from Paris, and it was performed with great ceremony ; the waltz at first was looked upon as undignified and somewhat disreputable, but it caught on in a sudden craze and swept over the country. Mazourkas, too, were first seen at Almack's and occasioned many heart-burnings among dancers of the old school who found themselves called upon to combine grace with flexibility :

"I used to like the minuet ;
 'Twas danced in my young days ;
 And now and then I do not mind
 A gentle polonaise.
 A waltz is also passable ;
 I've shone in that before ;
 But this mazourka really is
 A most confounded bore !"

The importance of Almack's began to decline in the '40s, "a clear proof that the palmy days of exclusiveness are gone by in England," observed the *Quarterly Review*, but fashionable balls continued to be held there until 1865 or thereabouts. When not required for social functions the rooms, generally known as Willis's Rooms, were let for concerts—Braham was often heard there—balls, occasional dinners, and dramatic or other readings. Charles Kemble gave his Readings from Shakespeare at Willis's in 1844 and seven years later Thackeray delivered his lectures on the English Humorists there.

Writers on Club Life often speak of the '40s to the '60s as

haleyon days. At the time of the Queen's coronation there were some twenty-five clubs in the West End, and to one or more of these every man of society belonged. They included the Alfred and the Clarence Clubs, both of a literary nature, the former a sort of junior Athenæum and the latter a survival of Johnson's Literary Club, resuscitated by Campbell the poet; the Athenæum, much the same then as now, and only recently moved into its splendid Decimus Burton mansion; the Oriental, peopled by wonderful old Anglo-Indians, soldiers, administrators, Colonel Newcomes and Jos Sedleys, with a superb cellar and a chef who made the best curry in London; the exclusive Traveller's; and the Union, which admitted cultured men from the City and the professions.

White's was, of course, a prince among old clubs, with its famous Bow Window, from which, not so many years before, Brummell and his cronies had been used to stare out, in almost ludicrous aloofness, on the passers-by in St. James's Street. The exclusiveness of White's, which was a sort of male Almack's, is shown by the fact that neither Louis Napoleon nor Count D'Orsay could ever secure admission, though at the time, both were prominent and popular men of fashion.

Brooke's was almost as exclusive. A single black ball was sufficient to exclude a candidate, while the name of anyone who joined another club, White's excepted, was instantly removed from the list of members.

The club life so vividly depicted in Thackeray and his contemporaries, was a very quiet sort of existence. Most old club-men were comfortably off though not rich, few having an income of more than £1000 a year. Many were bachelors who, as the years rolled on, found their whole universe limited to the world of the club. A couple of small, ill-furnished rooms—sometimes over a mews, like poor Twemlow's—sheltered the average bachelor such time as he was not in the club. He usually rose about ten or eleven and strolled in the Park or up Bond Street until lunch time, when he would go to the club, lunch with some cronies and spend the afternoon there with the papers, unless the weather was fine enough to tempt him for a stroll. Soon after six he would return to his rooms to dress, repair to the club in time for dinner, and when that was over spend the evening talking or

PLATE IV.



THE OPENING BALL OF THE SEASON AT ALMACK'S ASSEMBLY ROOMS, 1843

playing cards over oft-replenished glasses of brandy and water. Sometimes there would be a theatre invitation, more frequently, perhaps, an invitation out to dinner, but these were often doubtful pleasures.

In those days, when dining at hotels or restaurants was unknown, a dinner-party was a matter of considerable moment. Readers of Thackeray will remember the commotion caused in Timmins's household when it was decided to entertain some eighteen guests.

Before the curiously named *diners à la Russe* were introduced, all carving was done at the table, the host and hostess usually tackling the joints, fish and puddings, while the male guests were expected to carve the fowls, hares, ducks, turkeys and other side dishes. Many a man earned constant invitations by his skill in dividing a chicken or slicing a tongue.

A formal dinner of any consequence meant two kinds of soup, two fish dishes, six or seven entrées, entremets, hors-d'œuvres, roasts and side-dishes innumerable. Every available inch of the table was loaded with silver and glass ornaments, while large sconces full of candles or the bright light of many-jet lustre chandeliers illumined the scene. The succession of wines drunk with each course was a ritual in itself. When the ladies had retired upstairs to the drawing-room, the men settled down to port and did it ample justice.

Club life had its own code of etiquette. A member sitting in the window was not expected to raise his hat when a lady of his acquaintance happened to pass in the street below; that he should have his hat on at all is explained by the fact that a great many members lunched and sat with their hats on until it was time to dress for dinner.

At some clubs there was a house dinner which proved a very convenient institution for retired army men or others for whom the quarter-days seemed very far apart. By the laws of the club the first four members who put down their names in the dinner-book were allowed the meal free of cost, paying only for the wine or beer they consumed. There was often considerable rivalry when the book was opened for signatures.

Smoking was long regarded in Society as a filthy habit. Cigars were not allowed at White's until 1845, and then

only in the smoking-room. Smoking was not permitted even in regimental messes and barracks until after the Crimean War. The uncompromising attitude of old members of White's towards the habit brought about a secession in 1866 when a number of smoking members, including the Prince of Wales, founded the Marlborough.

The whole fashionable world of Early Victorian days was a world of its own, as self-contained and exclusive as a club. Everyone knew everyone else, and shared with them certain well-defined rules of life and codes of manners. An unfathomable abyss separated Society from the Middle Classes, Mayfair from Bloomsbury; only to be bridged when Mayfair needed some of Bloomsbury's money and permitted one of its sons to marry a rich business man's daughter.

Life, on the whole, was very much quieter and homelier than now. During the Season there were a certain number of formal dinner-parties to give or go to, perhaps once a week there would be a night at the theatre or the opera, but the usual custom was to spend the evening at home with a few friends. Night clubs did not exist, restaurants were only patronised by youngsters and men-about-town, and the womenfolk were invariably graceful and dignified hostesses, sufficiently confident of themselves to need no adventitious help in entertaining their guests.

What their homes were like is yet familiar to most of us—the drawing-room on the first floor, its large windows curtained with red velvet; the furniture upholstered in silk or plush; the massive over-mantel mirror reflecting a host of small ornaments flanking the great ormolu clock in its glass shade. There were looking-glasses in all sorts of useless places, cases filled with stuffed birds and other rarities, china vases, little tables with Books of Beauty and Keepsakes arranged symmetrically upon them, and everywhere brackets burdened with nick-nacks. As the Victorian age progressed the fashion for solid mahogany banished to the kitchen and nursery all the delicate furniture of Chippendale and Sheraton, and weighty dining-tables with many leaves and massive legs took their place.

Many and splendid were the carriages in which Mayfair went visiting, or driving in the Park. There were magnificent coaches with gorgeous coachmen on equally gorgeous hammer-

cloths and footmen in cocked hats hanging on behind ; there were luxurious barouches or landaus ; snug little victorias, pony chaises and mail phaetons ; turn-outs of all kinds were to be seen in Regent Street, Belgrave Square or the Park, which, between five and seven o'clock of an evening, was sacred ground reserved for the Upper Ten.

The life of the Upper Classes, was, indeed, far remote from that of ordinary men for whom it was invested with a sort of glory. To ape their manners, affect a familiarity with their ways of life, study " the nobs " with awe as they rode or drove in the Park, was the paramount interest in life of many a city clerk or shopman whose own lines lay in very different places

As Disraeli said in *Sybil*, the Queen reigned over two nations " between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy ; who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets ; who are formed by a different breeding, and fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws—**THE RICH AND THE POOR.**" A few instances are sufficient to illustrate the attitude of the wealthier, educated classes—

In 1841 a member of Parliament voted that no supply of money should be made until an enquiry was conducted into the distress of the working classes, especially in the manufacturing districts ; his motion was negatived by 149 to 41. The Home Secretary ordered the keepers of St. James's Park not to admit persons who wore fustian jackets ; sentries had orders to use their bayonets, if necessary, to make women take off their pattens when crossing the same sacred precincts ; the Queen's stables at Windsor were voted by Parliament over three times the amount of money devoted to the education of the Lower Classes ; the royal kennels were clean, well-kept and warm while not a couple of miles away were the horrible slums of Westminster and St. Giles's Rookery.

Yet the attitude of these favoured beings was rather one of ignorance that others than themselves existed than of indifference or callousness. They were for the most part, unostentatious and charitable folk, apt to be inoffensively condescending (if condescension can ever be inoffensive) ; far readier to give a poor man a ten pound note than acknowledge

him capable of having a vote. They had a different mentality—they were indeed one distinct realm in the land of England. Generally well-to-do and often really rich, they had the perfect manners and rigid rules of social etiquette that were the outcome of generations of exclusiveness which had not been upset by newcomers from a different station in life; they were content to use their leisure elegantly, were fairly cultured, well-travelled, and such vices as they had were not flaunted vulgarly before the world. The sons of Mayfair and Belgravia were sometimes wild, but the public was complacent to the lustiness of youth and somewhat snobbish in its eagerness to pardon offences in a young man with wealth and birth.

One of the principal interests of the man in society was racing, which, before the days of travel, motor-cars and yachting, played an even more important part in social life than it does now.

General interest in the Turf had been greatly increased by the love of George IV for the sport which, during his reign and that of William IV, had been thrown open so that many common, "vulgar fellers" had begun to run their own horses and carry off prizes. Ridsdale, the Yorkshire trainer, won the Derby of 1832 with St. Giles; the following year the race was won by Sadler's Dangerous; William Gully, M.P., Ridsdale's former partner, who had been stable-boy, butcher, publican and prize-fighter in his time, won the St. Leger of 1832 with his Margrave.

Neither Victoria nor the Prince Consort were great racing enthusiasts, but the older generation of their time handed on the tradition of the last two reigns and did their best to replace the backing of the throne.

Derby Day was always a festival for peer and Cockney alike. Before train services were organised to cope with the crowds, the road to the Derby was thronged during most of the preceding day and thousands camped out on the Downs. An anonymous writer of the '50s thus describes it:

"From Westminster Bridge to the historical heath, was almost one continuous panorama of life, joviality, cheer and fun; every hedgerow was lined with open-mouthed yokels, gaping at the 'coves from Lunnon' of whom they had heard so much, but had never seen before; every ditch supported a

natural-artificial cripple ; every beerhouse was fronted by holiday crowds quaffing ale and inviting one to join ; and to cap all this, the miles of vehicles with their accompanying dust gave every one the complexion of chimney-sweeps, despite veil, artificial nose, and other guises incidental to a real journey by the road.

“ Here were gipsies of the old original form, who, if permitted to tell a modest girl her fortune, invariably wound up by informing her ‘ she’d be the mother of six,’ dancing booths, and tableaux vivants booths ; booths where sparring and booths where drinking might be indulged in freely, booths where terrible melodramas were given, gambling booths and thimble-rig booths ; roulette and three card establishments, where every vice come down from the days of Noah might be indulged in without let or hindrance.

“ Luncheon on the Derby and Oaks days was an institution that dwarfed the most ambitious displays of hampers and cold pies consumed on the tops of drags. Conceive a huge marquee with tables the entire length groaning under every delicacy, from plovers’ eggs at a shilling a-piece to pâtés and blanc-manges of the Gunter school of creation. Imagine vats six feet high around the entire walls distilling the best champagne in goblets filled by the most expert footmen. Conceive all this, free, gratis and for nothing by simply presenting your card with the name of your regiment inscribed ; behold the genial host smiling contentedly, as, supporting on his arm a live Duchess he administered to the internal wants of one of the most beautiful women of the day ! ”

Perhaps the most sensational Derby of the period was that of 1844, when the winner, Mr. Wood’s Running Rein, was the subject of a sensational lawsuit. Colonel Peel, owner of Orlando, who came in second, claimed the stakes on the ground that Running Rein was not the horse represented, and was too old to run in the Derby. The stewards refused to pay out the stakes but placed them into Court, whereupon Wood brought his action. But the evidence went to prove that the horse was really a steed named Gladiator and was at least a year over the age-limit for Derby runners. The trial was long and bitter, but the horse was spirited away to prevent investigation, and Colonel Peel won his case, Running

Rein being not only disqualified for the Derby but for the Two-Year Old plate he had won the previous year.

The Derby was run in a snowstorm when Ridsdale's Bloomsbury won in 1830 ; and there was a certain amount of snow, though not actually during the race, when Mr. Chaplin's Hermit won in 1867.

Hermit's Derby was, indeed, a very famous race, with a sad romance attached to it, as it practically killed the young Marquis of Hastings, who won such a reputation for wild extravagance in the '60s. As a youngster of 22 he began betting heavily at Newmarket and, in 1862, started a stable of some fifty horses with which, during the next few years, he won the Cambridgeshire, Grand Prix, Goodwood Cup and Cesarewitch. He made and lost colossal sums at betting. Enormously rich and ignorant of the value of money Hastings became one of the wildest of the wild set about town. Whenever he appeared at a public-house or restaurant he would order a case of champagne, to be followed by another when the first was finished, and whoever happened to be within hail, had free drinks for the rest of the evening. In 1864 his famous elopement with the beautiful Lady Florence Paget startled society. The lady had been engaged to Mr. Chaplin, but the young Marquis—"the wicked Marquis" he was sometimes called—captured her heart and one fine day, while out shopping, she left her brougham at the door of a famous linen draper's conveniently situated between two busy streets, entered the shop and passed straight through to the other exit where the Marquis's friend, Fred Granville was waiting with a hansom.

The Marquis had two fancied horses in the Derby of 1867—a colt called The Earl and a filly named Lady Elizabeth. Hastings rather inclined to the chance of The Earl, but his trainer preferred Lady Elizabeth. Ultimately The Earl was scratched. Lady Elizabeth ran in the race, but was badly beaten. The Marquis had convinced himself that whatever won the Derby Hermit would not. Consequently he took every opportunity of laying against the horse which belonged to his great rival in love. His opinion cost him £103,000. The money was promptly found, but at the sacrifice of the beautiful estate of Loudoun.

A wild life had already ruined the young peer's health,

but this blow took him aback, though nobody who saw him drive off the course with his wild companions thought that his losses or chagrin had affected him. "I did not show it, did I?" he said to a friend on his death-bed. "But it fairly broke my heart." He died five months later, only twenty-six years of age, his life having been one huge gamble—which he had lost.

The Marquis of Hastings was one of a wild gang of young men who helped to increase the pace of the Fast Sixties. Among them were Sir Henry de Hoghton, who wore a velvet suit and a red tie and nonchalantly gambled away thousands of pounds; Lord Londesborough, who at one sitting lost £30,000 at cards to that inveterate gambler, Mr. George Payne, who was the centre of every fashionable gathering that met for gaming in any form and who rarely picked up a hand at whist for less than £100 a game; Sir Robert Peel, another heavy card player; Jonas Hunt, who had ridden in the Balaclava charge before he was twenty and gambled as furiously and bravely as ever he had fought; the "mad" Marquis of Waterford who was wont to rush about the Hay-market with joints of raw meat under his arm, and who, a redoubtable boxer, was always ready, drunk or sober—usually the former—for a fight and laid many a professional pugilist on the floor; and Robert Grimston, son of Lord Verulam, another fierce fighter, of whom Ruskin wrote: "If a prize-fight took place within a come-at-able distance of the University, Grimston was pretty sure to be there. 'Look here, you fellows,' he would say to his chums, 'there is going to be a prize-fight next week, about fifteen miles away and we must all go. I am going to have the office from London the night before.' Perhaps someone would suggest the escapade being discovered. 'The chances are we shall not be discovered,' he would reply, 'and rustication for attending a fight would be no disgrace, as half the county gentlemen of England attend them.'"

The noble art of self-defence had been practised by men of gentle birth for many years; we all remember how Tom and Jerry took lessons in the noble art in the academy of the great Tom Cribb. Before the Americanisation of boxing by enormous purses, prize-fighting was a real though doubtfully legitimate sport. George IV, a really good boxer, used to

tell how he tackled a burly Brighton butcher who had fallen foul of him, and after a battle lasting an hour and twenty minutes left the knight of the cleaver senseless on the ground. How much of this was on a par with his defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo was never known.

One of the best of amateur boxers was young Hope Johnstone, whose exploit at Northallerton was worthy of the great bruisers of old. One day, in the Autumn of 1843, he had a quarrel with the landlord of the Black Bull, gave him a sound thrashing and then took on, in succession, two local fighters, the mail guard and a recruiting sergeant who happened to be putting up at the inn. After these five victories he was anxious to take on anyone else who might be game for a fight, but no one accepted his challenge.

This is, perhaps, the place to mention one or two heroes of the ring during the period. One thinks immediately of William Thompson, better known as Bendigo, the Nottingham man who was champion of England in 1839 and beat Ben Caunt in a terrific battle of 93 rounds in 1845. When he was drunk Bendigo kept Nottingham in a state of terror, but he was converted at a religious meeting and, except during one or two lapses, toured the country as a living example of a man of wrath reclaimed from sin. Toothless from his many fights, Bendigo used to make no attempt at preaching but simply threw himself into a sparring attitude crying, "All my life I have been fighting for the devil, now I am fighting for my Christ."

Another religious pugilist was Morris Roberts, the Birmingham publican, showman and bookmaker. While running a public-house—the Bell Inn, Dale End, Birmingham—Roberts was attracted by Methodism and dressing himself in semi-clerical attire, took to labouring hard in the slums. On one occasion he met his brother Dan and some pals, making their way to a ring. Morris thereupon fell on his knees in the street and prayed that Dan should be converted. Dan was in no mood for sermons, however, so he and his friends picked Morris up bodily and carried him in their cab to the field where the ring had been pitched. The sight of the ropes and stakes round the green was too much for Morris the Methodist. Before anyone realised what he was doing he tossed off his top hat, threw aside his coat, white tie and

immaculate shirt, and ducking under the ropes, first seconded his brother and then fought a round or two on his own account.

The Police, it should be observed, were very strongly opposed to prize-fighting during early Victorian years and battles were fought, without gloves, in a roped-off ring in some secluded field.

Among great fights of the time must be mentioned the meeting of Charlie Freeman, the six-feet-ten Yankee boxer and William Perry, the Tipton Slasher, at Sawbridgeworth, on December the 4th, 1842. After seventy rounds the fight was adjourned on account of the darkness, and when it was resumed, a week later, at Gravesend, the Tipton Slasher was disqualified because he fell before receiving a blow.

The greatest of all professional fighters of the period was undoubtedly Tom Sayers, familiarly known as "The Little Wonder." He had risen to fame in the boxing world after his defeat of Jack Grant, the "Borough Market Pet," in a battle of 63 rounds, at Mildenhall, Suffolk, in 1852. He was then taken up by that old warrior Ben Caunt and, after beating a certain Jack Masters, fought unsuccessfully for the Middle-Weight Championship with Langham in a terrific battle of 60 rounds. In 1857 he beat the Tipton Slasher, and thus became Champion of England.

All previous fights of his own—indeed, of any boxer—were eclipsed by the memorable encounter between Sayers and John Heenan, "The Benicia Boy," which took place on Tuesday, April 17, 1860, in a field near Farnborough. Heenan was a New Yorker who had fought his way to fame the other side of the Atlantic and came over to England to win the British belt then held by Tom Sayers. Heenan was a giant in size, six foot one and a half inches tall and weighing 13 stone, while Sayers was but a little over 10 stone.

The authorities were bent upon preventing the meeting, but all the world of sport had wind of what was happening and as the day drew nearer the excitement grew more tense. Amongst youngsters at school, in all the Universities, at clubs, in military circles, in the lobby of the House of Commons, at the Stock Exchange, in fact everywhere, the great prize-fight was the topic of conversation. The management had great responsibility in getting the great show through, for

they were beset by difficulties, and it was thought that possibly at the last moment the authorities might interfere.

London Bridge, four o'clock A.M. was the order given for the rendezvous. All classes of society were represented, and coachmen in livery and tigers with natty boots and shining top-hats were nearly as plentiful as hackney coachmen. It was indeed a sight. The low East End sportsman hustled the Corinthian, who had left his carriage, and the Jew booky, who was there "to make a bit," rubbed shoulders with the cream of aristocracy. The arrangements on the part of the railway company were admirable, and the first train, consisting of no less than thirty-three carriages, was soon filled and awaited the signal to start immediately the two warriors should arrive. It was an anxious ten minutes, for there was still the chance of an arrest, and a possibility of the whole thing collapsing. But at exactly twenty minutes past four, there was a cheering heard outside the station, which swelled into a great roar as Tom Sayers, dressed very flashily in a broad check suit, appeared upon the platform.

Never, perhaps, in the history of the Prize Ring had such a representative crowd forgathered to witness a fight. There were men of letters, members of both Houses of Parliament, including Palmerston himself, although he was Prime Minister, the cream of the artistic, literary, dramatic and musical world, and many of the foremost military men, and leaders of fashion of the day. The trip was made more delightful by the brilliant conversation, and the popping of corks was very frequent, for many of the "toffs" had provided themselves with hampers, and brought their servants with them to look after their comforts.

It would be tedious to describe the rounds of this fight, the conclusion of which is thus described by that excellent chronicler, "Tourist." "In the twenty-ninth round Sayers seemed to obtain his second wind, and was much fresher than his opponent, whose eyes were in a sorry plight; one was all but closed, and the other was following suit. They had been fighting desperately, and both had suffered, for Tom's arm was twice its normal size, and his face and body were much bruised. Yet his eyes were all right, and it was seen that the Englishman's chance lay in his being able to blind the Yankee. Persevering, he again hit Heenan over the good optic, and



The Royal Procession. In the first carriage are seated the Emperor of Russia, the King of Saxony, and the Prince Consort, acting host for the Queen



A pleasant and well-provided picnic on the course
AT ASCOT RACES IN 1844

Jemmy Welsh shouted out, 'That's it, Tom—put up his shutters, and the show is over.' And Sayers did all he could to follow his advice, for in the thirtieth round the American was all but blind.

"The excitement was terrific, and was added to by the arrival of the police. In spite of this, however, the men were sent up again and again. In the thirty-sixth round Heenan rushed at his man and catching him round the neck, tried to hold him on the ropes; but Tom slipped from him like an eel, and rolled over on the grass. 'Time' was called for the thirty-seventh round, and the men again faced each other. All this while the police were struggling in the crowd to get to the ringside. Nevertheless the men went on fighting. Heenan's hands were puffed up like boxing-gloves, and did little damage to his opponent. Sayers in this round twice landed on the eyes, and those who were able to see declared that this made the American totally blind, and had it not been for the disturbance that followed, the battle would certainly have gone to Sayers. Unable to see, Heenan rushed at Tom and managed more by luck than judgment to get a grip of him. They were near the ropes, and the police had nearly made their way to the ringside. Heenan managed to get Tom's head over the ropes, and pressed it there until he was nearly black in the face, and there is no doubt that he would have been strangled had somebody not cut the ropes. Then the scene that ensued beggars description. The referee, umpires and seconds, and all were scattered, the mob was trying to keep the officers back, so that the fight should end; but that was impossible, for the referee could not see the men. Sayers was knocked down and nearly tramped upon, and Heenan's name was shouted as victor; but Tom was on his feet dealing blows upon the wet, bleeding face of his adversary, and then his name was shrieked out, as scramble after scramble went on in the midst of this surging sea of humanity. During a brief cessation Sayers was on his second's knee, when Heenan rushed across the ring and, proving that he was not quite so blind as he appeared, struck Jemmy Welsh a blow in the face and knocked him over. Then seizing Sayers, the two men rolled over together. As they got to their feet a wild scramble went on between them, when fortunately the referee managed to get near and ordered them to cease

fighting. By this time the police were present in force, and as there was no possibility of re-erecting the ring and continuing the battle, the men left the arena. Heenan was like a madman, and rushed off through the crowd, and was within five minutes as blind as a bat and had to be led. Sayers, although a good deal damaged, was strong, and could have fought on for a considerable time, so the interruption was fatal to his success."

And so ended the great international fight, which had caused such excitement throughout the whole of Great Britain and America.

But to return to the Upper Ten from this long digression on boxing.

One of the most remarkable social functions ever held was the Eglinton Tournament, organised by the Earl of Eglinton at his Ayrshire seat. The young Earl, caught up in the Gothic rage, determined to revive the age of chivalry in all its glory. For two years he laboured with his preparations, and the fame of what was to take place spread to all Europe. Full dress rehearsals took place in the grounds of the Eyre Arms, Kilburn, and thousands flocked thither to watch the tilting and charging against the quintain.

The Tournament opened on August the 8th, 1839, in a large ground properly arranged for jousting. Each of the knights had his own pavilion above which flew his banner, and some 3000 spectators, some of them in suitable fancy-dress, gazed down on the lists from the galleries.

The knights taking part were the Marquis of Waterford ; the Earls of Eglinton, Craven and Cassilis ; Viscounts Alford and Glenlyon ; Captains Gage, Fairlie, and Beresford ; Lord Cranstoun ; Sir Frederick Johnstone and Sir Francis Hopkins ; and Messrs Jerningham, Lamb, Campbell, Boothby and Letchmere. These knights all bore chivalric names—such as the Knight of the Dragon, the Griffin, the Black Lion, the White Rose, the Burning Tower and so forth ; their emblems and symbols being emblazoned on the trappings of their horses. Some of the costumes were gorgeous. The Marquis of Londonderry, as King of the Tourney, wore a magnificent train of green velvet, embroidered with gold, covered by a crimson velvet cloak trimmed with gold and ermine, and wore a crown covered with crimson velvet ; the Earl of Eglinton, as Lord of the Tournament, had a rich suit of gilt armour with

skirt of chain mail ; and the others were in like splendour. The esquires and pages were all men of fortune and position. Lady Seymour, as Queen of Beauty, wore a robe of crimson velvet, with the Seymour crest embroidered in silver on blue velvet, and a cloak of cerise velvet trimmed with gold and ermine. The ladies were mostly in costumes of the 13th and 15th centuries.

On the opening day, the procession marched out from the castle in a wonderful array—men-at-arms clad in demi-suits of armour, musicians, trumpeters, banner-bearers, marshals, heralds, *poursuivants*, a judge of the peace, retainers, halberdiers, a knight marshal, a jester, archers, servitors, swordsmen and chamberlains.

Unfortunately, however, the rain came down with true Ayrshire persistence ; the medieval appearance of the gathering was spoiled by multitudes of umbrellas ; and the Queen of Beauty, who was to have ridden with her ladies on palfreys, proceeded to the lists in a closed landau. Under such discouraging circumstances, the rest of the cavalcade set forth, the gaily-trimmed horses splashing in mud, the armour washed with pitiless rain ; the velvets and laces saturated and limp with wet. The knights with their esquires entered their pavilions, while the rest of the personages took up their various posts. The knights issued forth in due course, two and two, paid their devoirs to the ladies in the galleries and then fought to the sound of the trumpet. This fighting consisted simply in galloping against one another, each striking his lance on the armour of his opponent and as the wooden lances were so made as to be easily broken, no particular danger was to be apprehended. After several couples had jousted, the Earl of Eglinton and the Marquis of Waterford came forward, attended by eight esquires and pages and ran at each other until two lances were broken. The Earl was then declared the best knight of the day and was rewarded by the Queen of Beauty with a crown of honour. There was also fencing and broadsword fighting, among the contestants being Prince Louis Bonaparte, afterwards the Emperor Napoleon III, who was soundly beaten by a youngster named Charteris.

But the rain fell in torrents and the Tournament was spoiled, so, on the 31st, it was decided to abandon the whole affair. When all was over and the bills came in, Lord Eglinton found that he was some £30,000 out of pocket.

There were, in the '30s, two houses where wits gathered and men of parts, social, literary and artistic, assembled to exchange views. They were Holland House and Lady Blessington's homes at Seamore Place or Gore House.

Much has been written of Holland House and its circle, and the names of its visitors represent the whole spiritual life of the period from 1796 until Lord Holland's death in 1840. There would be seen caustic old Sydney Smith; Jeffrey, the fierce Scottish critic; Macaulay, before he went to India in 1834; the erratic Lord Brougham; Grattan, the traveller; Washington Irving, on his occasional visits to England; Tom Moore, the poet; "Johnny" Russell, the Whig statesman; and a host of illustrious foreigners including Talleyrand, Metternich and Cavour. Over all these brilliant spirits Lady Holland ruled with impartial sway. "Enough of that, Macaulay," she once observed to the somewhat prolix historian. "Now tell us something else."

Lady Blessington, the hostess to whom all that was brilliant in England flocked, was one of the most remarkable women of her time and is worthy a more detailed mention. Margaret Power, a pretty and lively girl, married at the age of sixteen a particularly dissipated and offensive army captain, named Farmer. That was in 1806, and the marriage was so unhappy that in a few months she left her husband and came to London where she passed six years under the protection of another soldier, Captain Jenkins. She then met the Earl of Blessington—at that time Lord Mountjoy—who gave Jenkins some £10,000 as a solatium and set up house-keeping with Margaret. Happily for all parties, in 1817, her legal husband, Farmer, fell out of a window in a drunken orgy and broke his neck, so Blessington married the widow and they settled down in St. James's Square.

Lady Blessington's wit and cleverness soon assembled all the clever men of the capital, but Society looked askance upon her and in 1822 she and her husband found it convenient to make a prolonged Continental tour. In Paris they met Count Alfred D'Orsay who eventually became one of the party.

D'Orsay was a handsome, accomplished youngster of some twenty-one or two, a good fencer, draughtsman and horseman, a king among fops and an emperor among lovers and he soon

acquired an influence in the Blessington family. For some extraordinary reason, the Earl, whose heir was dead, desired the Count to marry one of his daughters, and the ceremony took place in 1827, when the girl was but a few months over fifteen. Unaware of the reason, she was deeply offended when D'Orsay did one of the few decent things in his life and kept the marriage a matter of name only.

The Earl of Blessington died in 1829 at Paris, where they were all living in luxury. But his fortune had been spent, and only a meagre £2000 a year was left for the extravagant countess and the more extravagant D'Orsay who now openly lived in the house with her and his wife. They returned to London in 1830 and took up their residence at Seamore Place, where the literary circle was soon renewed.

That somewhat egregious American, N. P. Willis, describes an evening at Seamore Place with a burst of enthusiasm which gives a really excellent picture of the Countess and her Victorian surroundings :

“ In a long library lined alternately with splendidly-bound books and mirrors, and with a deep window of the breadth of the room, opening upon Hyde Park, I found Lady Blessington alone. The picture to my eye as the door opened was a very lovely one : a woman of remarkable beauty half buried in a *fauteuil* of yellow satin, reading by a magnificent lamp suspended from the centre of the arched ceiling ; sofas, couches, ottomans and busts arranged in rather a crowded sumptuousness through the room ; enamel tables, covered with expensive and elegant trifles in every corner ; and a delicate white hand relieved on the back of a book, to which the eye was attracted by the blaze of its diamond rings. As the servant mentioned my name, she rose and gave me her hand very cordially ; and a gentleman entering immediately after, she presented me to Count D'Orsay, the well-known Pelham of London, and certainly the most splendid specimen of a man and a well-dressed one that I had ever seen. Tea was brought in immediately, and conversation went swimmingly on.”

In 1836 they removed to Gore House—though D'Orsay made a feeble attempt at respectability by living some few doors distant—and the literary circle followed them thither. Everybody was of Lady Blessington's circle—Tom Moore, Bulwer Lytton, Talfourd, Dickens, Landor, Macready, Hook,

the Disraelis, Albert Smith, Landseer, Louis Napoleon—at that time an exile—Thackeray and many others.

But the extravagance of the Countess and D'Orsay meant inevitable ruin. Lady Blessington tried to stave off creditors by writing and editing Keepsakes and Books of Beauty, making as much as £1000 a year. But this was quite inadequate for the expenses they incurred. For a long time D'Orsay could never leave the house except between midnight on Saturday and midnight on Sunday when debtors were immune from arrest, and many facetious stories were told of his adventures in escaping the duns. The crisis came in 1849, Lady Blessington and the Count went to Paris and Gore House was sold up.

D'Orsay was one of the characters of the period, the last of the dandies. He stood over six feet in height, had a fine, if somewhat womanish figure, while his handsome face was adorned with waving chestnut curls and whiskers. He was inordinately extravagant in matters of dress and practically set the fashion for the young bloods of the day. He bathed twice daily in scented water and when he travelled was accompanied by the most elaborate of outfits in silver and gold. In one of Carlyle's letters is a characteristic account of a visit from the Count :

“About a fortnight ago this Phœbus Apollo of dandyism, escorted by poor little Chorley, came whirling hither in a chariot that struck all Chelsea into mute amazement with splendour. He is a tall fellow of six foot three, built like a tower, with floods of dark auburn hair, with a beauty, with an adornment unsurpassable on this planet ; withal a rather substantial fellow at bottom, by no means without insight, without fun, and a sort of rough sarcasm rather striking out of such a porcelain figure. He said, looking at Shelley's bust, in his French accent, ‘Ah, it is one of those faces who weesh to swallow their chin.’ He admired the fine epic, etc., etc. ; hoped I would call soon and see Lady Blessington withal. Jane laughed for two days at the contrast of my plaid dressing-gown, bilious, iron countenance, and this Paphian apparition. I did not call till the other day, and I left my card merely. I do not see well what good I can get by meeting him much, or Lady B. and demirepdom, though I should not object to see it once, and then oftener if agreeable.”

CHAPTER III

THE PLEASURE GARDENS

Vauxhall Gardens—The Entrance—Quadrangle—Spectators—An Evening's Entertainment—Fireworks—Balloon Ascents—The End—Cremorne—Gala Nights—Attractions—Derby Night—White Conduit House—Rosherville Gardens—Other Gardens—Surrey Gardens—The Eagle—Greenwich—Whitebait—The Fair—Richardson's Show—Wild Beast Show.

PLEASURE Gardens are a form of entertainment of which the last few generations have had little experience, but before the great migration to the suburbs they made one of the pleasantest forms of open-air amusement the Londoner could enjoy. To quit the narrow street or court in which he lived within a few yards of his business and walk to some leafy bower where he could listen to music, dance, sing, make love or drink as the fancy took him, was a pleasant enough method of passing his spare time. So the Pleasure Gardens flourished until Suburbia began to draw away their better-class patrons, and died when none but the noisy and boisterous began to frequent them.

With the closing of Cremorne in 1877 the vogue for outdoor places of amusement practically came to an end. They had been steadily on the decline for many years. The old age of Vauxhall was full of vicissitudes; Cremorne had but a brief popularity, smaller rivals faded away one by one, and the very sites of most have been long since buried and forgotten beneath acres of bricks and mortar.

Vauxhall Gardens occupied approximately the area now comprised by Gooding Street, Leopold Street and Tyers Street, the third side fronting on Upper Kennington Lane, at that time known as Bridge Street. Until 1840 they had been open without intermission since 1732, though by the '30s their glory had largely departed and in this book we see them only in their closing days, shrouded in gloom, and shabby with age and ill-repute.

In one of his sketches Albert Smith depicts the Gardens as

they appeared when he was taken to see them as a boy : “ I remember being shown the lights of the orchestra twinkling through the trees from the road, and hearing the indistinct crash of the band as I waited for all our party, literally trembling with excitement at the pay place. Then there came the dark passage, which I hurried along with feelings almost of awe ; and finally the bewildering *coup d'oeil*, as the dazzling walk before the great supper-room, with its balloons and flags, and high crowns of light—its panels of looking-glasses, and long lines of radiant stars, festoons, and arches—burst upon me and took away my breath with almost every other faculty. The entire evening was to me one scene of continuous enchantment. The Battle of Waterloo was being represented on the firework ground and I could not divest myself of the idea that it was a real engagement I was witnessing, as the sharp-shooters fired from behind trees, the artillery wagon blew up, and the struggle and conflagration took place at Hougomont. When I stood, years afterwards, on the real battlefield I was disappointed in its effect. I thought it ought to have been a great deal more like Vauxhall. The supper was another great feature—eating by the light of variegated lamps, with romantic views painted on the walls, and music playing all the time, was on a level with the most brilliant entertainment described in the maddest, wildest traditions of Eastern story-tellers.”

On entering the turnstile in Bridge Street, the Grand Quadrangle lay to the right, shimmering with thousands of variegated lamps hung among the foliage of the trees and festooned from branch to branch in tasteful patterns. The quadrangle was formed by four colonnades, enclosing a space surrounded with walks and planted with trees. This was known as The Grove, and in the Grove was the orchestra, glittering with lights, and resplendent in its bastard Gothic design. “ Beneath its glittering roof has stood nearly every popular English vocalist, who, during the last hundred years, have charmed the public with their song ; and from hence alternately are poured forth strains of soft and pensive beauty, and melodies of rich and generous humour, in turn, soothing and delighting the gay throngs who nightly crowd round.” Thus, says a guide-book of the period, with more enthusiasm than grammar.

Beneath the colonnades of the Quadrangle were boxes for supper-parties, and facing the orchestra stood a pavilion called the Prince's Gallery, in honour of Frederick, Prince of Wales, who had frequently diverted himself in the Gardens. In addition to these buildings, there was the Rotunda, a theatre capable of holding some 2000 persons, where ballets and light theatrical turns were frequently given, and horsemanship feats, rope dancing, and the inevitable dioramas exhibited. Beyond the Quadrangle, at the eastern end of the gardens was a large space in front of the firework tower where scenic displays of various kinds were held. In later years this was turned into the Polar Regions, making a setting for the reproduction of Ross's Arctic voyage, discussed by Mrs. Tibb's boarders :

“ ‘Never saw anything like that Ross's set-out—eh ? ’

“ ‘I think the white bears is partickierlerly well done,’ suggested Mrs. Bloss. ‘In their shaggy white coats, they look just like Polar bears—don't you think they do, Mr. Evenson ? ’

“ ‘I think they look a great deal more like omnibus cads on all fours,’ replied the discontented one.”—(*Boz.*)

Round this space were dark and shady walks, where billing and cooing formed the staple entertainment.

The gardens were opened from May Day to the last day of August, the usual hours being from seven until eleven o'clock in the evening when the proceedings were closed with a grand display of fireworks. Admission varied at different times, but it was usually half a crown, with an extra charge for ascending the grandstand to view the fireworks.

So much for the place itself. The company who attended came under Mr. Venus's heading of “human warious,” for even in its old age the Gardens retained a certain popularity.

“Of course there were votaries of pleasure of all ranks there—rakish young surgeons, fast young clerks and commercialists, occasional dandies of the Guard regiments, and the rest. Old Lord Colchicum was there in attendance upon Mademoiselle Caracoline, who had been riding in the ring, and who talked her native French very loud, and used idiomatic expressions of exceeding strength as she walked about, leaning on the arm of his Lordship.”—(*Pendennis.*)

No pains were spared to make a good and attractive

programme. Quantity rather than quality was desired by the public and, as the bill here reproduced shows, the managers provided a very varied entertainment.

"The gardens are crowded," writes a visitor in 1852; "dense masses are congregated around a sort of open temple, which at Vauxhall stands in lieu of a music-room. The first part of the performance is just over; and a lady, whose voice is rather the worse for wear, and who defies the cool of the evening with bare shoulders and arms, is in the act of being encored. She is delighted, and so are the audience. Many years ago this spot witnessed the performances of Grisi, Rubini, Lablache, and other first-class musical celebrities.

"The crowd promenaded these gardens in all directions. In the background is a gloomy avenue of trees, where loving couples walk, and where the night air is tinged with the hue of romance. Even the bubbling of a fountain may be heard in the distance. We go in search of the sound; but, alas, we witness nothing save the triumph of the insane activity of the illuminator. A tiny rivulet forces its way through the grass; it is not deep enough to drown a herring, yet its banks are studded with rows of long arrow-headed gas-lights.

"Following the rivulet, we reach the bank of a gas-lit pond, with a gigantic Neptune and eight white sea-horses. To the left of the god opens another gloomy avenue which leads us straightway to *Fate*, to the hermit, and the temple of Pythia, who, in the guise of a gipsy, reclining on a straw under a straw-roofed shed, with a stable lanthorn at her side, is in the habit of reading the most brilliant Future on the palm of your hand, for the ridiculously low price of sixpence only.

"The dwelling of the sage hermit is much less primitive, nor are believers permitted to enter it. They must stand on the threshold, from whence they may admire a weird and awful scenery—mountains, precipices and valleys, and the *genius loci*, a large cat with fiery eyes, all charmingly worked in canvas and pasteboard. The old man, with his beard so white and his staff so strong, comes up from the mysterious depth of a pasteboard ravine; he asks a few questions and disappears again, and in a few minutes the believer receives his or her Future, carefully copied out on cream-coloured paper, and in verses, too, with his or her name as an anagram.

Coronation FETE,

Under the Especial Patronage of His Majesty,



Royal
Gardens,
VAUXHALL.

TO-MORROW

FRIDAY, 20th JULY.

In a style of unequalled magnificence, and, in point of entertainments, more highly attractive than any other ever given at Vauxhall.

15,000 ADDITIONAL LAMPS

will be displayed in a number of beautiful and appropriate devices, the whole affording a most brilliant display in honour of

HIS MAJESTY'S CORONATION.

The Proprietors particularly request the attention of the Public to the Attractions on this Evening, which will be found to exceed, in interest and variety, all Entertainment ever given, on any Night, and which will be found to embrace, on this individual occasion, all the Amusement, Talent, and Splendor, of which Vauxhall is capable.

The thought expressed, and the applause bestowed, on

Mr. COOKE'S

Unrivalled Stud of Horses,
And celebrated Troop of Equestrians,

At the Invitation of which, the Proprietors, in order to afford the Public a rare opportunity of witnessing these extraordinary Performances, and, on this Night, they will be all repeated.

The Grand Spectacle of the

Battle of Waterloo,

which has increased each Night in the estimation of the Public, and which has been the subject of the highest interest and queries, will, in addition to the numerous and already announced, be exhibited this Evening.

The Characters represented are

- DUC DE WELLINGTON.....MR. KEMP.**
Aide-de-Camp.....MR. GIBBON and MR. WARD
Marsus of ARMY.....MR. EVANS and MR. WILLIAMS.
Aide-de-Camp.....MR. DUPONT.
NATOLSON.....MR. SCOLLERS and MR. PIPE.
Aide-de-Camp.....MR. SCOLLERS and MR. PIPE.
Commander of the French Cavalry.....SIGNOR SPELTERINI.
Commander of the English Infantry.....MR. MORRELL.
Commander of the French Infantry.....MR. MORRELL.

1000 Soldiers, Horse & Foot, BLOWING UP OF HOUGOMONT.

Will be engaged in the Battle, which will conclude with the terrific Spectacle of the

DISPLAY OF FIRE WORKS, BY D'ERNST,

Immediately after the Battle, a most splendid

Will take place, the Artist being paid a large Sum extra in produce an additional number of Pieces on this occasion, in the course of which,

Mr. COOKE'S FIERY ASCENT

will be performed to the summit of the Tower, where the Fire-works remain perfectly good, surrounded by a tremendous explosion of Fire Works.

THE CONCERT

With no usual, take place in the open Orchestra, and consist of a variety of appropriate SONGS, DUETS, &c.

The Amusements will terminate with the New Vaudeville, called

"PAY TO MY ORDER,"

Polono Dervill, Mr. HARRIS—Baller (the French) Mr. S. HENNETT—Thibaut (a young Frenchman) Mr. BIZAN LUCIAN—Mr. W. PEARCE—Jambou (the Negro).
Miss GRADON—Madame Thibaut, Mrs. TITZAN LUCIAN.

Mr. DUPONT

12 Horses at once

In a species Circle, purposely erected; previous to which

MASTER MACKINTOSH

(The celebrated Highland Youth) will give his performance on the HORSE;

A Grand Turkish PROCESSION and ENTREE with

TWENTY HORSES!

Representing the Sports and Events of Turkish life, and exhibiting the Danzette and Signory of Mr. COOKE'S beautiful Stud of Horses.

SIGNOR SPELTERINI,

(The wonderful Italian Hercules)

Will perform several astonishing feats of strength and agility, including a variety of Light and Heavy Saltimont, concluding with an amazing feat (never attempted by any person but himself) of

Supporting a Beam of immense weight on his Chin.

Mr. BLACKMORE

Will perform a most extraordinary and surprising feat on the SLACK ROPE.

His various Amusements will be aided and enforced by the Berseilicettes and Whims of

CHING LAU LAURO,

(The popular Buffo)

Who will conclude his astonishing feats of strength and agility, including a variety of Light and Heavy Saltimont, concluding with an amazing feat (never attempted by any person but himself) of

Extended on the backs of Two Chairs, in imitation of a Spread Eagle.

The NEW COMIC PANTOMIME set up for the Jovial Night, and which was received with the

most successful and popular success.

DARBY AND JOAN;

DA, HARLEQUIN AND ROBIN GOODFELLOW.

Onions, King of the Palace.....MISS HOLLAND

Reese Goodwillow.....J. AUGWAY

Daisy, (afterwards Harlequin).....MR. RIDGWAY

Flourishiergart, (afterwards Pantomime).....MISS MADON

Joan.....MISS GOUGH

Collaborer.....MIDDLER ROSEBER

Pantomime Characters, by the Corps de Ballet.

PROGRAMME OF AN ENTERTAINMENT IN VAUXHALL GARDENS IN THE EARLY 30's

“Hark ! a gun is fired in the shrubbery. The promenaders who are familiar with the place, turn round, and all rush in one direction, sweeping us along with them. Before we can collect ourselves, we have been pushed forward to a panoramic stage, on which Nelson, in plaster, is in the act of expiring, while Wellington, in pasteboard, rides over the battlefield of Waterloo.

“Wellington has scarcely triumphed over Napoleon, and silenced the French batteries, when the cannonade recommences in the shrubbery : one—two guns ! it is the signal for the arena. Unless you purchase a seat in the boxes or the galleries, you have no chance of seeing the exhibition in the circus, for the pit, which is gratis, is crowded to suffocation. Men and women dance on unsaddled horses, play with balls and knives, and jump through paper and over boards ; half a dozen old and young clowns distort their joints ; a lady dances on a rope, *à la marionette* ; the horses are neighing and the whips smacking, and the sand is being thrown up, and the boarding trembles with the tramp of horses, and there is no end of cheering.

“To the fireworks ! they are the most brilliant exhibition of the evening. The gardens are bathed in a bluish light, and the many thousand lamps look all pale and ominous. The gigantic and fantastic city, which before loomed through the twilight of the distant future, burns now in Bengal fire. It is Moscow ! it is the Kremlin, and they are burning it ! Sounds of music, voices of lamentation, issue from the flames, guns are firing, rockets shoot up and burst with an awful noise, the walls give way—they fall, and from the general destruction issues a young girl, with very thin clothing and very little of it, who makes her escape over a rope at a dizzy height.”

The fireworks, music and various shows formed constant and unfailing popular features of this programme, but an immense attraction to Vauxhall was provided by the balloon ascents made by Charles Green, and other well-known aeronauts. The first of these was in the evening of September 17th, 1835. A year later, on November 7, he ascended in the huge Nassau Balloon, accompanied by Monck Mason and Hollond, and after an eighteen-hour journey, landed at Weilburg, in Nassau. This journey created great excitement, and thousands went to Vauxhall to see the heroes on their

return. As Ingoldsby relates, in his account of "The 'Monstre' Balloon":

"And there they'll be seen—they'll be all to be seen!
 The great-coats, the coffee-pots, mugs and tureen!
 With the tight-rope and fireworks, and dancing between,
 If the weather should only prove fair and serene;
 And there, on a beautiful transparent screen,
 In the middle you'll see a large picture of Green,
 Mr. Hollond on one side, who hired the machine,
 Mr. Mason on t'other, describing the scene;
 And Fame, on one leg, in the air, like a queen,
 With three wreaths and a trumpet, will over them lean;
 While Envy, in serpents and black bombazin,
 Looks on from below with an air of chagrin!
 Then they'll play up a tune in the Royal Saloon,
 And the people will dance by the light of the moon,
 And keep up the ball till the next day at noon."

During the next few years Green and others made constant ascents from Vauxhall, as, indeed from every other London pleasure garden, on one occasion (September 10, 1838) reaching the greatest altitude until then attained, 27,146 feet.

Vauxhall was noted for its arrack-punch, a particularly heady liquor formed by mixing grains of flowers of benjamin with the rum. So far as solid refreshments were concerned, the extreme dearness and the small portions furnished wits with humour for many generations; no young spark treated his girl to a supper without telling her of the ham-carver who undertook to cover the whole eleven acres of the Gardens with the wafery slices from a single ham.

After being temporarily closed in 1840, the Gardens had another, though rather chequered lease of existence, but gradually sank in reputation and ceased to attract visitors. Then came the beginning of the end—repeated announcements that the Gardens would remain open for only a week, a month, or another season before being closed for ever. This went on throughout the late '50s until at last, on July 25, 1859, the end really did come, and a landmark in the social life of London was brought to an end. Soon afterwards, the properties were sold theatre, orchestra, fountains, statues and all. According to Timbs: "though Vauxhall Gardens retained their place to the very last, the lamps had long fallen off in their golden fires; the punch got weaker, the admission-money less; the company fell off in a like ratio of respecta-

bility, and grew dingy, not to say 'raffish'—a sorry falling-off from the Vauxhall crowd of a century before. Low prices brought low company; the conventional wax-lights got fewer; the punch gave way to fiery brandy and doctored stout. The semblance of Vauxhall was still preserved in the representation of the orchestra printed upon the plates and mugs, and the old firework bell tinkled away as gaily as ever; but matters grew more and more seedy; the place seemed literally worn-out; the very trees grew scrubby and shabby, and looked as if they were singed; and it was high time to say, as well as to see in letters of lamps 'Farewell'."

The lineal descendant of Vauxhall was Cremorne which, within the memory of many now living, was in its prime. These Gardens were in Chelsea, stretching from the King's Road to the River, on the site, now covered with houses, between Lots Road and Edith Grove. Originally belonging to the seat of Lord Cremorne, the grounds passed from the family in the late '20s, and in 1831 were opened to the public, primarily as a sports club or stadium. Dancing was, however, classed among the sports, for a programme of that year announces a "Grand Miscellaneous Concert; The lovers of Terpsichore may sport the light fantastic toe." Fireworks were soon added as an attraction, and by 1837 the inevitable balloon ascents became popular features of the place.

Consisting of really delightful grounds with open glades and lawns rolling down to a charming river frontage, Cremorne Gardens soon acquired great popularity and attracted many from the already waning glories of Vauxhall. The price of admission, besides, was only a shilling, and the place was easy accessible by omnibus from Charing Cross, while steamers from the river piers conveyed thither constant streams of pleasure-makers. By 1840 all tastes were being catered for; there was an American Bowling Saloon, a Chinese Orchestra, the Hermit's Cave, a Crystal Grotto, a Firework Temple, Circus, Maze, Marionette Theatre, and, for those who preferred soft whispers to any of these distractions, discreetly placed arbours in darksome nooks where blushes, or the absence of them, could not be noticed. Nor was Nicholson's Judge and Jury entertainment missing, for in 1843 the scandalous Lord Chief Baron hired the place for a time and temporarily lowered its reputation.

In 1845 the Gardens were extended and improved under a new management who announced that "The Public can never be disappointed in Cremorne, because every night is a gala night and every day a flower-show." On the opening day Mr. Green took up Lord George Beresford, two ladies, two other gentlemen and the famous Drury Lane clown, Tom Matthews, who, before leaving earth favoured the company with Grimaldi's famous song of "Hot Codlins" and at a height of 3000 feet broke forth into his new favourite comic of "Pigs' Pettitoes."

So Cremorne waxed in favour, changing management several times. The balloon ascents still attracted thousands, though they had to be enhanced by such thrills as acrobats performing on trapezes hung from the car, and innumerable firework displays. A great aquatic tournament was held on the Thames in 1851 in which river steamers took part and an out-of-date vessel was blown up. Parachute descents, scenic battles of a ferocious nature, strong men and human salamanders were all enlisted to increase the attractions of the Gardens, but the real magnet which drew thousands was the general air of jollity, the dancing, and the infinite opportunities for flirtations of a not always innocuous nature. As a popular song of the time put it :

"Oh, I met her on a steamer
 As I journeyed to Cremorne ;
 A crinoline and a pork-pie hat
 Her figure did adorn.
 Our glances met, she smiled at me
 Then, as if unawares,
 My arm it slipped around her waist,
 While on the cabin stairs.
 I asked her if she'd go with me,
 Said she, ' Yes, if I'd let her,'
 'Twas just as good as going home,
 Yes, as good, and a good deal better !"

In 1861 Madame Genéviève, *alias* Selina Young, the Female Blondin, crossed the Thames on a tight-rope—though she got a ducking on the Cremorne side—while Liotard, the famous acrobat, did astonishing feats with high trapezes. Two years later an Eglinton Tournament was held, though the noble knights and dames were Drury Lane coryphées and clowns. A fine restaurant was added at which refreshments and prices

were all of the best, though they attracted the worst. A Russian Circus, Chang the Giant, a certain Man Frog who smoked and drank beneath five feet of water, a captive balloon which took up thirty passengers at a time—all continued to attract custom, but the place began to grow rowdier and more disreputable.

During his brief visit to England in the '60s Prince Humbert of Italy—he had not then come to the throne—frequented the Gardens every night, by no means put out when the more brazen ladies of pleasure twisted his long moustaches or made overt advances for the royal patronage.

Cremorne was to be seen at its rowdiest on the night of Derby Day. The dancing platforms were then swaying masses of men and women—swells and their actress friends, shop-boys and their best girls, together with a good many members of either sex on the look-out for partners, all went to form a throng such as no public assembly nowadays could exhibit. The crudest humour was the order of the day. In the Hermit's Cave and the Fairy Bower noisy recluses and painted fairies made merry; and from the tables where the élite were dining or supping, the most boisterous mirth prevailed, often taking the form of hurling loaves of bread and entire dishes of meat at a friendly fellow-roisterer's head. Such nights invariably ended in a row which, deliberately started by some group of young idiots, rapidly spread itself all over the grounds and eventually necessitated a massed attack by the police.

Little wonder that the peaceful inhabitants of neighbouring Chelsea began to find Cremorne and its patrons an intolerable nuisance. Despite their protests, however, the place lasted on until 1877, when it was finally closed and what had, when all is said and done, been a pleasure to many and the source of far more innocent amusement than vice, was closed.

Besides Vauxhall and Cremorne there were many smaller pleasure grounds where holiday-making Cockneys could find amusement and entertainment. Bagnigge Wells, in the King's Cross Road, was already moribund, though dancing, concerts and the usual balloon ascents were to be enjoyed for the small fee of threepence. It was closed in 1841, and a public-house is now the sole commemorator of its site. More lively was

the White Conduit House, in Penton Street, Islington, which had a long and varied history. Originally little more than tea gardens, in the early '20s, the grounds were improved by the addition of dancing and concert rooms, archery was introduced, balloon ascents organised and great firework displays given. In 1826 Monsieur Chalbert astounded the patrons by consuming arsenic, boiling oil, molten lead, and such-like things, varying his performance by sitting at ease in a large oven where a leg of lamb was roasting and a steak grilling.

Further improvements were introduced, but the aristocratic patronage fell off and by 1830 the "Vite Cundick Ouse," as its habitués called it, was principally visited by gentlemen who removed their coats but retained their hats during the exertion of dancing. A typical concert at White Conduit House is described by Boz :

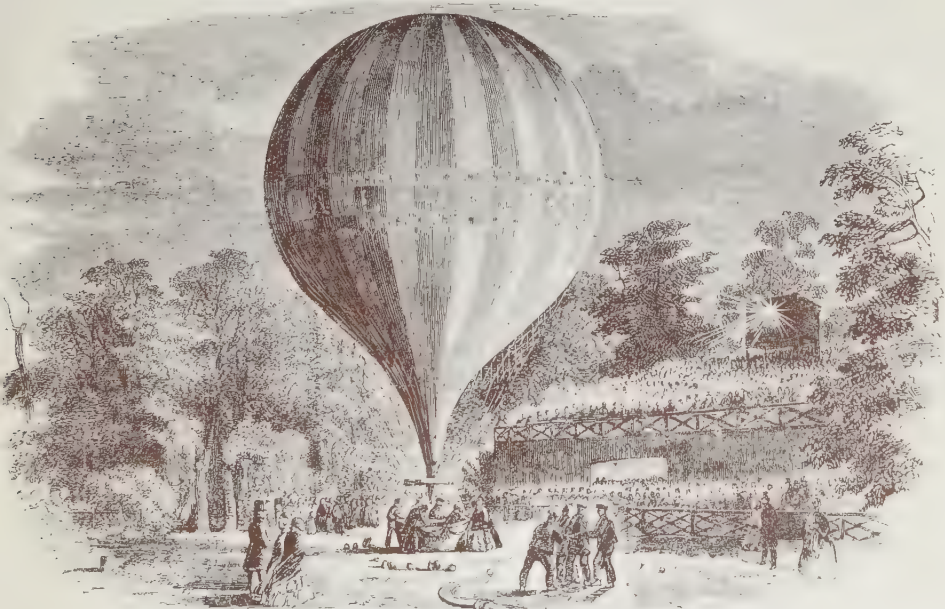
"There was an immense room—ninety-seven sixpenn'orths of gin-and-water, thirty-two small glasses of brandy-and-water, five-and-twenty bottled ales, and forty-one neguses ; and the ornamental painter's journeyman, with his wife and a select circle of acquaintance, were seated at one of the side-tables near the orchestra. The concert began. Song—sentimental—by a light-haired young gentleman in a blue coat and bright basket buttons—[applause]. Another song, doubtful, by another gentleman in another blue coat and more bright basket buttons—[increased applause]. Duet, Mr. Jennings Rodolph and Mrs. Jennings Rodolph, 'Red Ruffian, retire !'—[great applause]. Solo, Miss Julia Montague (positively on this occasion only)—'I am a Friar'—[great enthusiasm]. Original Duet, comic—Mr. H. Taplin (the comic gentleman) and Miss Martin—'The Time of Day.' 'Brayvo !—Brayvo !' cried the ornamental painter's journeyman's party, as Miss Martin was gracefully led in by the comic gentleman. 'Go to work, Harry,' cried the comic gentleman's personal friends. 'Tap—tap—tap,' went the leader's bow on the music desk. The symphony began, and was soon afterwards followed by a faint kind of ventriloquial chirping, proceeding apparently from the deepest recesses of the interior of Miss Amelia Martin. 'Sing out !' shouted one gentleman in a white greatcoat. 'Don't be afraid to put the steam on, old gal !' exclaimed another. 'S—s—s—s—



The Italian Walk, ornamented with sculpture and fountains



Gothic ruins, picturesquely set among the trees



Green the famous aeronaut ascending in his Victoria balloon. The proceedings were illuminated by one of the new electric lamps at the back of the spectators' gallery

VAUXHALL GARDENS AND ONE OF GREEN'S BALLOON ASCENTS IN 1849

s—s—s!’ went the five-and-twenty bottled ales. ‘Shame, shame!’ remonstrated the ornamental painter’s journeyman’s party. ‘S—s—s—s!’ went the bottled ales again, accompanied by all the gins, and a majority of the brandies.”

At last, too rowdy and down at heels to exist longer, the White Conduit House was closed on 22nd January 1849, and ere the year was out, its gardens were covered by the foundations of houses.

At least once in the summertime all good citizens took their wives for shrimps and tea at Rosherville Gardens which stood a mile or so to the London side of Gravesend. It was opened in 1837, in an old chalk pit, planted with the usual glades and sequestered haunts. There were a good concert hall, excellent dancing floors, gypsies, mazes and other appropriate attractions, but as the place could only be reached by boat, its success was almost wholly dependent upon the pleasure of the river steamship powers. Rosherville must have been the first pleasure resort to make use of what is now known as a slogan—“The Place to spend a Happy Day.” This was posted all over London and was, for a time, a popular catchphrase.

The Gardens of the Yorkshire Stingo, Marylebone Road, were much resorted to in the '30s and '40s for tea, dancing and fireworks. The Bayswater Tea Gardens, now covered by Lancaster Gate, were of a similar nature, though frequented by a better class; while the Belvidere Tea Gardens, Pentonville Road, were mostly frequented by racket players. Copenhagen House, where the Metropolitan Cattle Market now stands, was a quiet pleasure garden from which, until 1852, the fields rolled away to Highgate, and was a favourite Sunday resort of middle-aged citizens and their wives who drank tea and watched the cricket in the adjoining meadows.

The Spaniards at Hampstead, where Mrs. Bardell entertained her select party, was a little farther out, but was easily reached by omnibus or “cabrioily.”

Highbury Barn was popular within the memory of many now living, as it was only closed to dancing in 1870. It was formerly a favourite rendezvous for dinner-parties, and in 1858 the inauguration of the “Leviathan” dancing platform, partly open to the sky and surrounded by conveni-

ent alcoves, increased its popularity. As usual, however, the place fell into bad repute and the rowdy company that made merry there eventually caused the Barn to be closed.

South of the River were St. Helena Gardens, Rotherhithe, now commemorated by St. Helena Road. This was a favourite dancing resort for the neighbourhood until 1880. There were gala nights every Monday and Tuesday and admission to all the fun of the fair was but sixpence!

After Vauxhall and Cremorne, the Surrey Gardens provided the best *al fresco* entertainment. The gardens practically adjoined Kennington Common and were approached from the Kennington Road by Penton Street or New Street. The picturesque grounds, extending to more than fifteen acres, were laid out with over two hundred varieties of forest trees from all countries, and by the large circular lake in the middle of the Gardens, itself over three acres in extent, was the spacious and well-kept menagerie, that had originally occupied Exeter Change. Fireworks were always a feature of the Surrey Gardens, but what was carried out to most realistic perfection was the combination of panorama with the actual lake, to form pictures of Mount Vesuvius and the Bay of Naples (1837) in which eruptions of the volcano were thrillingly rendered by coloured lights and fireworks. "Hecla," "London during the Great Fire of 1666," "The Storming of Badajoz" and other pieces followed, among them, in 1850, a most realistic representation of "Napoleon's Passage over the Alps," in which, by an ingenious arrangement of mirrors, a row of living men in the front of the picture was reflected over and over again in diminishing proportions so that at one time actually fifty thousand figures could be seen winding across the Alpine pass.

Jullien's promenade concerts proved another great attraction, but the absence of dancing proved a fatal bar to the success of the gardens and in 1856 part of the site was used to build the Surrey Music Hall. This was rather a gorgeous affair, with octagonal towers at each corner and verandas on the first and second floors. It held 12,000 persons, and, perhaps, was never so full as when hired by Charles Spurgeon for some of his early revival services. At one of these, it may be remembered, a fatal accident took place on the evening

of Sunday, October 19th, 1856, when a false alarm of fire caused a stampede during which seven persons were trampled to death. Five years later there really was a fire, for in June 1861, the place was burnt to the ground,

“Up and down the City Road
In and out the Eagle”

is a familiar song yet, though the Eagle as a tavern and pleasure garden has long since vanished. Built on the site of the old Shepherd and Shepherdess tea gardens in 1835, the Eagle soon attracted what Peter Cunningham calls the “lower orders,” for there “people can see, hear and drink while at theatres they can only see and hear.”

“‘How ’ev’nly,’ said Miss J’mima Ivins and Miss J’mima Ivins’s friend, both at once, when they had passed the gate and were fairly inside the gardens. There were the walks, beautifully gravelled and planted—and the refreshment boxes, painted and ornamented like so many snuff-boxes—and the variegated lamps shedding their rich light upon the company’s heads—and the place for dancing ready chalked for the company’s feet—and a Moorish band playing at one end of the gardens—and an opposition military band playing away at the other. Then, the waiters were rushing to and fro with glasses of negus, and glasses of brandy-and-water, and bottles of ale, and bottles of stout ; and ginger-beer was going off in one place, and practical jokes were going on in another ; and people were crowding to the door of the Rotunda ; and, in short, the whole scene was, as Miss J’mima Ivins, inspired by the novelty, or the shrub, or both, observed—‘one of dazzling excitement.’ As to the concert-room, never was anything half so splendid. There was an orchestra for the singers, all paint, gilding, and plate glass ; and such an organ ! The audience were seated on elevated benches round the room, and crowded into every part of it ; and everybody was eating and drinking as comfortably as possible. Just before the concert commenced Mr. Samuel Wilkins ordered two glasses of rum-and-water ‘warm with——’ and two slices of lemon, for himself and the other young man, together with ‘a pint o’ sherry wine for the ladies, and some sweet caraway-seed biscuits ;’ and they would have been quite comfortable and happy, only a strange gentleman with large whiskers *would*

stare at Miss J'mima Ivins, and another gentleman in a plaid waistcoat *would* wink at Miss J'mima Ivins's friend ; on which Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man exhibited symptoms of boiling over, and began to mutter about ' people's imperence,' and ' swells out o' luck ' ; and to intimate, in oblique terms, a vague intention of knocking somebody's head off ; which he was only prevented from announcing more emphatically by both Miss J'mima Ivins and her friend threatening to faint away on the spot if he said another word.

" The concert commenced—overture on the organ. ' How solemn ! ' exclaimed Miss J'mima Ivins, glancing, perhaps unconsciously, at the gentleman with the whiskers. Mr. Samuel Wilkins, who had been muttering apart for some time past, as if he were holding a confidential conversation with the gilt knob of the dress-cane, breathed hard—breathing vengeance, perhaps—but said nothing. ' The Soldier Tired,' Miss Somebody in white satin. ' Ancore ! ' cried Miss J'mima Ivins's friend. ' Ancore ! ' shouted the gentleman in the plaid waistcoat immediately, hammering the table with a stout bottle. Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man eyed the man behind the waistcoat from head to foot, and cast a look of interrogative contempt towards Mr. Samuel Wilkins. Comic song, accompanied on the organ. Miss J'mima Ivins was convulsed with laughter—so was the man with the whiskers. Everything the ladies did, the plaid waistcoat and whiskers did, by way of expressing unity of sentiment and congeniality of soul ; and Miss J'mima Ivins, and Miss J'mima Ivins's friend grew lively and talkative, as Mr. Samuel Wilkins and Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man grew morose and surly in inverse proportion.

" The concert and vaudeville concluded, they promenaded the gardens. The waistcoat and whiskers did the same ; and made divers remarks complimentary to the ankles of Miss J'mima Ivins and friend in an audible tone. At length, not satisfied with these numerous atrocities they actually came up and asked Miss J'mima Ivins and Miss J'mima Ivins's friend to dance without taking no more notice of Mr. Samuel Wilkins and Miss J'mima Ivins's friend's young man than if they was nobody."

Some years after this contretemps, the Eagle Tavern

blossomed out into the Grecian Saloon where operas, farces and ballets were performed by talented artists, boxes and pit costing no more than a shilling and refreshment tickets being obtainable for sixpence.

Greenwich and its Park—enlivened, until 1857, at Easter and Whitsun by the famous Fair—was a regular resort of pleasure-makers. For those who could afford them there were the whitebait taverns at Greenwich and Blackwall thronged to the very windows from May to August, frequented by cabinet ministers, the *haut-ton* and well-to-do merchants. The Ship, and the Crown and Sceptre were the famous Greenwich houses; across the water, at Blackwall, was Lovegrove's, by many epicures considered the best of all houses for eating the little fish. According to Dr. Pereira, Lovegrove's had a special way of cooking whitebait which, it appears, to be enjoyed to their full should be served within an hour of being caught. They should then be eaten piping hot, to the accompaniment of iced champagne or punch.

These fish dinners were wonderful affairs. They usually began with boiled flounder, followed by seven or eight dishes of salmon cooked in various ways; then came filleted sole, fried eel—each with its appropriate sauce—and finally the whitebait.

“At last we come to the bait,” writes Thackeray. “All eyes are turned eagerly to the door and enter:

Mr. Derbyshire (with a silver dish of whitebait).

John (brown bread and butter).

Samuel (lemons and cayenne).

Frederick (a dish of whitebait).

Gustavus (brown bread and butter).

Adolphus (whitebait).

“A waiter with a napkin, which he flaps about the room in an easy, *dégagé* manner.

“‘There's plenty more to follow, sir,’ says Mr. D., whisking off the cover. Frederick and Adolphus pass rapidly round with their dishes; John and Gustavus place their refreshments on the table; and Samuel obsequiously insinuates the condiments under his charge.”

Poorer folk, who brought their own dinners and ate them in the boat or picnicked in the grounds, partook of shrimps instead of whitebait and were amply catered for in the matter

of tea by most of the inhabitants of Greenwich. "If you take every card that is offered," observes Miller, "you will have a score or two before you cross the Park; 'Tea—eight-pence—with a pleasant view of the River.' 'Tea made, with shrimps, ninepence.' They are the most accommodating people in the world at Greenwich. You can walk into almost every other house, order tea, and receive thanks at your departure, for only a few pence."

As for the Fair, noted as it was throughout the world—I quote from Boz the more readily as his description applies, in a lesser degree, to any country fair in the kingdom, and gives, besides, an account of that once famous but now forgotten institution, Richardson's Show:

"Imagine yourself in an extremely dense crowd, which swings you to and fro, and in and out, and every way but the right one; add to this the screams of women, the shouts of boys, the clanging of gongs, the firing of pistols, the ringing of bells, the bellowings of speaking-trumpets, the squeaking of penny dittos, the noise of a dozen bands, with three drums in each, all playing different tunes at the same time, the hallooing of showmen, and an occasional roar from the wild-beast shows; and you are in the very centre and heart of the fair.

"This immense booth, with the large stage in front, so brightly illuminated with variegated lamps, and pots of burning fat, is 'Richardson's,' where you have a melodrama (with three murders and a ghost), a pantomime, a comic song, an overture, and some incidental music, all done in five-and-twenty minutes.

"The company are now promenading outside in all the dignity of wigs, spangles, red ochre, and whiting. See with what a ferocious air the gentleman who personates the Mexican chief paces up and down, and with what an eye of calm dignity the principal tragedian gazes on the crowd below, or converses confidentially with the harlequin! The four clowns, who are engaged in a mock broadsword combat, may be all very well for the low-minded holiday-makers; but these are the people for the reflective portion of the community. They look so noble in those Roman dresses, with their yellow legs and arms, long black curly heads, bushy eyebrows, and scowl expressive of assassination, and vengeance, and everything else that



EASTER MONDAY HOLIDAY CROWD IN 1847, ON THE WAY TO GREENWICH BY BOAT

is grand and solemn. Then the ladies—were there ever such innocent and awful-looking beings, as they walk up and down the platform in twos and threes, with their arms round each other's waists, or leaning for support on one of those majestic men? Their spangled muslin dresses and blue satin shoes and sandals (a *leetle* the worse for wear) are the admiration of all beholders; and the playful manner in which they check the advances of the clown is perfectly enchanting.

“ ‘Just a going to begin! Pray come for’erd, come for’erd,’ exclaims the man in the countryman’s dress, for the seventieth time: and people force their way up the steps in crowds. The band suddenly strikes up, the harlequin and columbine set the example, reels are formed in less than no time, the Roman heroes place their arms akimbo, and dance with considerable agility; and the leading tragic actress, and the gentleman who enacts the ‘swell’ in the pantomime foot it to perfection. ‘All in to begin,’ shouts the manager, when no more people can be induced to ‘come for’erd,’ and away rush the leading members of the company to do the dreadful in the first piece.

“A change of performance takes place every day during the fair, but the story of the tragedy is always pretty much the same. There is a rightful heir, who loves a young lady, and is beloved by her; and a wrongful heir, who loves her too, and isn’t beloved by her; and the wrongful heir gets hold of the rightful heir, and throws him into a dungeon, just to kill him off when convenient, for which purpose he hires a couple of assassins—a good one and a bad one—who, the moment they are left alone, get up a little murder on their own account, the good one killing the bad one, and the bad one wounding the good one. Then the rightful heir is discovered in prison, carefully holding a long chain in his hands, and seated despondingly in a large arm-chair; and the young lady comes in to two bars of soft music, and embraces the rightful heir; and then the wrongful heir comes in to two bars of quick music (technically called ‘a hurry’), and goes on in a most shocking manner, throwing the young lady about as if she was nobody, and calling the rightful heir ‘Ar-recreant—ar-wretch!’ in a very loud voice, which answers the double purpose of displaying his passion, and preventing the

sound being deadened by the sawdust. The interest becomes intense ; the wrongful heir draws his sword, and rushes on the rightful heir ; a blue smoke is seen, a gong is heard, and a tall white figure (who has been all this time behind the arm-chair, covered over with a table-cloth), slowly rises to the tune of ‘ Oft in the still night.’ This is no other than the ghost of the rightful heir’s father, who was killed by the wrongful heir’s father, at sight of which the wrongful heir becomes apoplectic, and is literally struck ‘ all of a heap,’ the stage not being large enough to admit of his falling down at full length. Then the good assassin staggers in, and says he was hired in conjunction with the bad assassin, by the wrongful heir, to kill the rightful heir ; and he’s killed a good many men in his time, but he’s very sorry for it, and won’t do so any more—a promise which he immediately redeems by dying off-hand, without any nonsense about it. Then the rightful heir throws down his chain ; and then two men, a sailor, and a young woman (the tenantry of the rightful heir) come in, and the ghost makes dumb motions to them, which they, by supernatural interference, understand—for no one else can ; and the ghost (who can’t do anything without blue fire) blesses the rightful heir and the young lady, by half suffocating them with smoke ; and then a muffin bell rings, and the curtain drops.

“ The exhibitions next in popularity to these itinerant theatres are the travelling menageries, or, to speak more intelligibly, the ‘ Wild Beast Shows,’ where a military band in beef-eaters’ costume, with leopard skin caps, play incessantly ; and where large, highly-coloured representations of tigers tearing men’s heads open, and a lion being burned with red-hot irons to induce him to drop its victim, are hung up outside by way of attracting visitors.

“ The principal officer at these places is generally a very tall, hoarse man, in a scarlet coat, with a cane in his hand, with which he occasionally raps the pictures we have just noticed by way of illustrating his description—something in this way : ‘ Here, here, here ; the lion, the lion (*tap*), exactly as he is represented on the canvas outside (*three taps*) : no waiting, remember ; no deception. The Fe-ro-cious lion (*tap, tap*), who bit off the gentleman’s head last Cambervell vos a twelve month, and has killed on the average three people a year ever since he arrived at maturity. No extra charge

on this account, recollect ; the price of admission is only sixpence.' This address never fails to produce a considerable sensation and sixpences flow into the treasury with wonderful rapidity.

"The dwarfs are also objects of great curiosity, and as a dwarf, a giantess, a living skeleton, a wild Indian, and 'a young lady of singular beauty, with perfectly white hair and pink eyes,' and two or three other natural curiosities, are usually exhibited together, for the small charge of a penny, they attract very numerous audiences.

"The grandest and most numerous frequented booth in the whole fair, however, is 'The Crown and Anchor'—a temporary ball-room—we forget how many hundred feet long, the price of admission to which is one shilling. Immediately on your right hand as you enter, after paying your money, is a refreshment place, at which cold beef, roast and boiled, French rolls, stout, wine, tongue, ham, even fowls, if we recollect right, are displayed in tempting array. There is a raised orchestra, and the place is boarded all the way down, in patches just wide enough for a country dance.

"There is no master of the ceremonies in this artificial Eden—all is primitive, unreserved and unstudied. The dust is blinding, the heat insupportable, the company somewhat noisy, and in the highest spirits possible ; the ladies, in the height of their innocent animation, dancing in the gentlemen's hats, and the gentlemen promenading 'the gay and festive scene' in the ladies' bonnets, or with the more expensive ornaments of false noses, and low-crowned, tinder-box-looking hats ; playing children's drums, and accompanied by ladies on the penny trumpet.

"The noise of these various instruments, the orchestra, the shouting, the 'scratchers,' and the dancing, is perfectly bewildering. The dancing itself beggars description—every figure lasts about an hour, and the ladies bounce up and down the middle with a degree of spirit which is quite indescribable. As to the gentlemen, they stamp their feet against the ground every time 'hands four round' begins, go down the middle and up again with cigars in their mouths, and silk handkerchiefs in their hands, and whirl their partners round, nothing loath, scrambling and falling, and embracing, and knocking up against the other couples, until they are fairly tired out,

and can move no longer. The same scene is repeated again and again (slightly varied by an occasional 'row') until a late hour at night; and a great many clerks and 'prentices find themselves next morning with aching heads, empty pockets, damaged hats, and a very imperfect recollection of how it was they did *not* get home."

CHAPTER IV

“SOMETHING IN THE CITY”

Old Businesses—Banks—Well-to-do Merchants—Mr. Dombey—Clerks—
Admirers of Fashion—Chop Houses—“Slap Bang” eating Houses—
Boarding Houses—Rural Suburbs—A Clerk’s Budget.

BEFORE the great migration to the suburbs began in the early '60s, the City was fairly thickly populated, 123,000 persons dwelling in an area now occupied solely by offices. Most of these inhabitants lived in the parishes of Cripplegate, Aldersgate, Bishopsgate, Aldgate, Newgate, Smithfield, Holborn, Blackfriars and St. Bride’s, forming, it will be observed, a circle round the actual sacred square mile of the City proper.

Some old merchants lived over their places of business, but most had moved out to the ever-growing districts round Bloomsbury, Kensington or Clapham, while a few had even penetrated so far into the country as Norwood. Although retail businesses were already tending to move westwards, Cheapside and St. Paul’s Churchyard still remained busy shopping centres, while Holborn even then tried to rival the Strand. Indeed, although the actual appearance of the streets, so far as their buildings are concerned, has changed and is changing daily, their nature is much the same to-day as it was eighty years ago.

In the office world, however, things were different. There were comparatively few companies, the majority of businesses being in the hands of partners, and even the banks were almost entirely under private control. It would, indeed, be difficult to recognise the progenitors of those enormous concerns whose offices are now to be found all over the city and suburbs. Walking down Lombard Street, for example, in 1837, the chief bankers’ offices were those of Barclay, Bevan, Tritton & Co. ; Barnetts, Hoare & Co. ; Bosanquet, Anderson & Co. ; Cunliffe, Brooks & Co. ; Esdaile, Grenfell, Thomas & Co. ; Denison, Hayward, Kennard & Co. ; John Feltham & Co. ;

Glyn, Halifax, Mills & Co. ; Hanbury, Taylor & Lloyds ; Robarts, Curtis & Co. ; Smith, Payn & Smith ; Stevenson & Salt ; Stone, Martin & Stone ; Vere, Sapte, Banbury & Co. ; Whitmore, Wells & Whitmore ; and Willis, Percival & Co. The only joint stock bank was the London and Westminster, with head office in Throgmorton Street and a branch in Waterloo Place.

The old private bank was a very intimate affair, the partners in the business taking a personal interest in all their customers and being well-known figures on " 'Change." Thackeray has drawn two typical City bankers in the Brothers Hobson : " Sir Brian had a bald head and light hair, a short whisker cut to his cheek, a buff waistcoat, very neat boots and hands. He looked like the Portrait of a Gentleman at the Exhibition, as the worthy is represented : dignified in attitude, bland, smiling and statesmanlike, sitting at a table unsealing letters, with a despatch-box and a silver inkstand before him, a column and a scarlet curtain behind, and a park in the distance, with a great thunderstorm lowering in the sky.

"In face, Hobson Newcome, Esq., was like his elder brother, but was more portly in person. He allowed his red whiskers to grow wherever nature had planted them, on his cheeks and under his chin. He wore thick shoes with nails in them, or natty round-toed boots, with tight trousers and a single strap. He affected the country-gentleman in his appearance. His hat had a broad brim, and the ample pockets of his cut-away coat were never destitute of agricultural produce, samples of beans or corn, which he used to bite and chew even on 'Change, or a whip-lash, or balls for horses : in fine, he was a good old country-gentleman. If it was fine in Thread-needle Street, he would say it was good weather for the hay ; if it rained, the country wanted rain ; if it was frosty, ' No hunting, to-day, Tomkins, my boy,' and so forth. As he rode from Bryanstone Square to the City you would take him—and he was pleased to be so taken—for a jolly country squire. He was a better man of business than his more solemn and stately brother, at whom he laughed in his jocular way ; and he said rightly, that a gentleman must get up very early in the morning who wanted to take *him* in."—(*Newcomes*.)

The old business life of the City has been depicted very

vividly by Dickens, and in the next few pages, I shall draw largely upon his descriptions.

The Cheeryble Twins are classical, if somewhat idealised, types of prosperous commercial men; their place of business was such as might have been found in any City Street. “Their office was situated in the oldest and cleanest house in a quiet, shady little square reached through some lanes and passages leading to the right of Threadneedle Street. . . . The only inscription on the doorpost was ‘Cheeryble Brothers’: but from a hasty glance at the directions of some packages which were lying about, Nicholas supposed that the Brothers Cheeryble were German merchants.

“Passing through a warehouse which presented every indication of a thriving business, Mr. Cheeryble led him into a little, partitioned-off counting-house, like a large glass case, in which counting-house there sat—as free from dust and blemish as if he had been fixed into the glass case before the top was put on, and had never come out since—a fat, elderly, large-faced clerk, with silver spectacles and powdered head. . . . There was scarcely an object in the place, animate, or inanimate, which did not partake in some degree of the scrupulous method and punctuality of Mr. Timothy Linkinwater. Punctual as the counting-house dial . . . the old clerk performed the minutest actions of the day, and arranged the minutest articles in the little room, in a precise and regular order. Paper, pens, ink, ruler, sealing-wax, wafers, pounce-box,* string box, fire box, Tim’s hat, Tim’s scrupulously folded gloves. Tim’s other coat—looking precisely like a back view of himself as it hung against the wall—all had their accustomed inches of space. . . .

“The warehousemen and porters were such sturdy, jolly fellows that it was a treat to see them. Among the shipping announcements and steam-packet lists which decorated the counting-house wall were designs for almshouses, statements of charities and plans for new hospitals. A blunderbuss and two swords hung above the chimney-piece, for the terror of

* Wafers were small discs of dried paste, which were used before envelopes were introduced. The wafer was moistened, placed between the flaps of the folded sheet of paper, and the whole was sealed or pressed together with a stamp. The pounce-box was something like a pepper caster, used for sprinkling pounce, a fine powder employed to give paper a surface for writing upon. The fire-box contained flint and tinder to light the candle for sealing.

evil-doers ; but the blunderbuss was rusty and shattered, and the swords were broken and edgeless. . . .”—(*Nickleby*.)

The twins, it may be remarked, lived over the business, and Tim Linkinwater, the chief clerk, had the back attic.

A contrast to the Cheerybles' well-arranged office and home was that of "The old-established firm of Anthony Chuzzlewit and Son, Manchester Warehousemen, and so forth, which had its place of business in a very narrow street somewhere behind the Post Office. A dim, dirty, smoky, tumble-down, rotten old house it was, as anybody would desire to see ; but there the firm of Anthony Chuzzlewit and Son transacted all their business and their pleasure too, such as it was ; for neither the young man nor the old had any other residence, or any care or thought beyond its narrow limits.

"Business, as may be readily supposed, was the main thing in this establishment ; insomuch indeed that it shouldered comfort out of doors, and jostled the domestic arrangements at every turn. Thus in the miserable bedrooms there were files of moth-eaten letters hanging up against the walls ; and linen rollers, and fragments of old patterns, and odds and ends of spoiled goods, strewed upon the ground ; while the meagre bedsteads, washing-stands, and scraps of carpet, were huddled away in corners as objects of secondary consideration, not to be thought of but as disagreeable necessities, furnishing no profit, and intruding on the one affair of life. The single sitting-room was on the same principle, a chaos of boxes and old papers, and had more counting-house stools in it than chairs : not to mention a great monster of a desk straddling over the middle of the floor, and an iron safe sunk in the wall above the fire-place. The solitary little table for purposes of refection and social enjoyment, bore as fair a proportion to the desk and other business furniture, as the graces and harmless relaxations of life had ever done, in the persons of the old man and his son, to their pursuit of wealth."

Something of the modern magnificence of business magnates is observable in Mr. Dombey, the merchant king, whose office was on a much larger scale than either of those described : "A solemn hush prevailed, as Mr. Dombey passed through the outer office. The wit of the counting-house became in a moment as mute as the row of leathern fire-buckets hanging up behind him. Such vapid and flat daylight as filtered

through the ground-glass windows and skylights, leaving a black sediment upon the panes, showed the books and papers, and the figures bending over them, enveloped in a studious gloom, and as much abstracted in appearance, from the world without, as if they were assembled at the bottom of the sea.

“When Perch the messenger, whose place was on a little bracket like a timepiece, saw Mr. Dombey come in—or rather when he felt that he was coming, for he had usually an instinctive sense of his approach—he hurried into Mr. Dombey’s room, stirred the fire, quarried fresh coals from the bowels of the coal-box, hung the newspaper to air upon the fender, put the chair ready, and the screen in its place, and was round upon his heel on the instant of Mr. Dombey’s entrance, to take his great-coat and hat, and hang them up. Then Perch took the newspaper, and gave it a turn or two in his hands before the fire, and laid it, deferentially, at Mr. Dombey’s elbow.

“Between Mr. Dombey and the common world, as it was accessible through the medium of the outer office—to which Mr. Dombey’s presence in his own room may be said to have struck like damp, or cold air—there were two degrees of descent. Mr. Carker in his own office was the first step; Mr. Morfin, in his own office, was the second. Each of these gentlemen occupied a little chamber like a bath-room, opening from the passage outside Mr. Dombey’s door. Mr. Carker, as Grand Vizier, inhabited the room that was nearest to the Sultan. Mr. Morfin as an officer of inferior state, inhabited the room that was nearest to the clerks.”

Small business men carried on their affairs with a very simple establishment. In Scrooge’s office, for instance, there was just the counting-house in which he sat himself and the “dismal little cell beyond, a sort of tank,” allotted to Bob Cratchit. “Scrooge had a very small fire, but the clerk’s fire was so very much smaller that it looked like one coal. But he couldn’t replenish it, for Scrooge kept the coal-box in his own room; and so surely as the clerk came in with the shovel, the master predicted that it would be necessary for them to part. Wherefore the clerk put on his white comforter, and tried to warm himself at the candle; in which effort, not being a man of strong imagination, he failed.”

The City clerk of the '30s was a very different being to

the well-dressed, well-mannered, well-spoken season-ticket holder of to-day. It would be interesting to know what the National Union of Clerks would make of Tim Linkinwater :

“ ‘ I’m not coming an hour later in the morning, you know,’ said Tim, breaking out all at once, and looking very resolute. ‘ I’m not going to sleep in the fresh air—no, nor I’m not going into the country either. A pretty thing at this time of day, certainly. It’s forty-four year next May since I first kept the books of Cheeryble Brothers. I’ve opened the safe every morning all that time (Sundays excepted) as the clock struck nine, and gone over the house every night at half-past ten (except on Foreign Post nights, and then twenty minutes before twelve) to see the doors fastened, and the fires out. I’ve never slept out of the back attic one single night. I’ve slept in that room,’ added Tim, sinking his voice a little, ‘ for four-and-forty year ; and if it wasn’t inconvenient, and didn’t interfere with business, I should request leave to die there.’ ”

There were no Saturday afternoons off, no Bank Holidays, and not a few employers looked upon Christmas Day in much the same light as Scrooge :

“ ‘ You’ll want all day to-morrow, I suppose ? ’ said Scrooge.

“ ‘ If quite convenient, sir.’

“ ‘ It’s not convenient,’ said Scrooge, ‘ and it’s not fair. If I was to stop half-a-crown for it, you’d think yourself ill-used, I’ll be bound ? ’

“ The clerk smiled faintly.

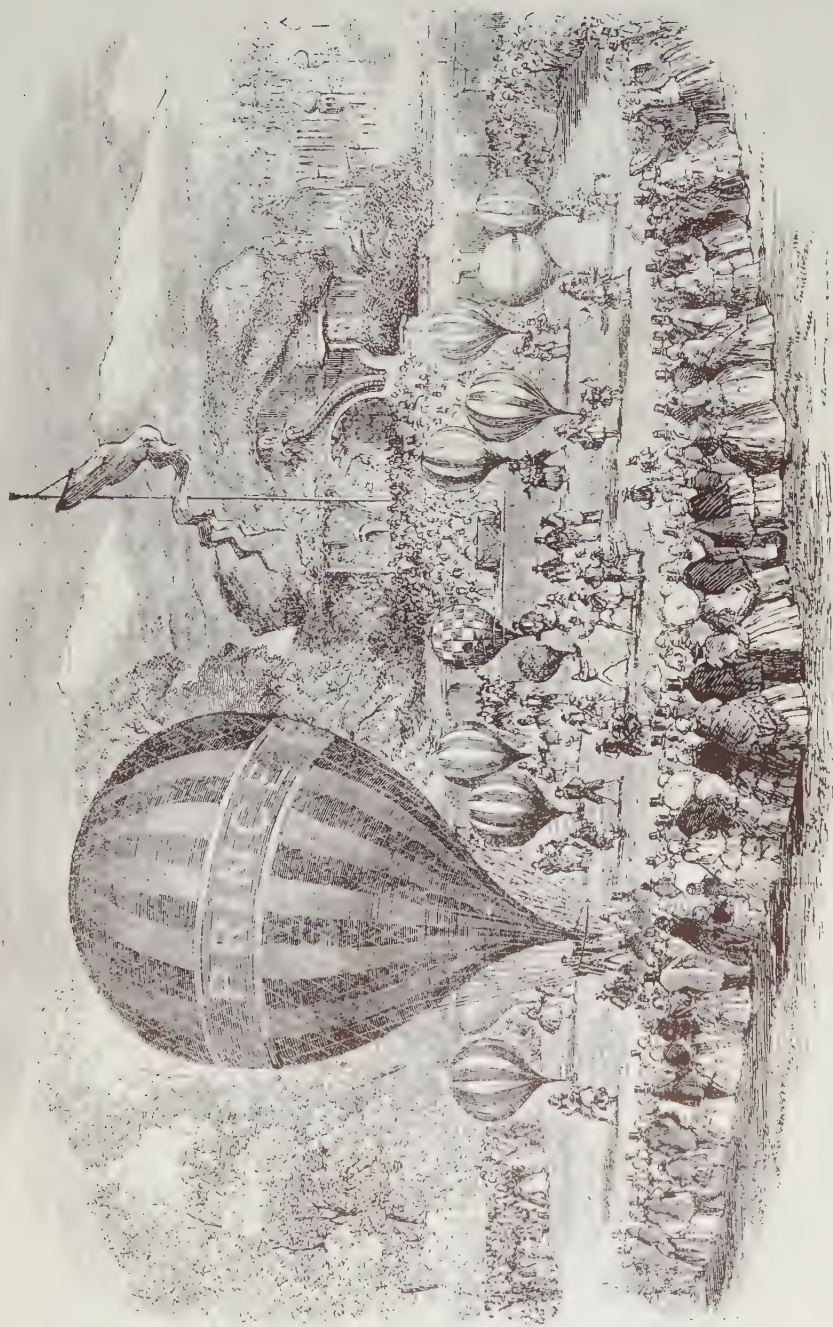
“ ‘ And yet,’ said Scrooge, ‘ you don’t think *me* ill-used, when I pay a day’s wages for no work.’

“ The clerk observed that it was only once a year.

“ ‘ A poor excuse for picking a man’s pocket every twenty-fifth of December ! ’ said Scrooge, buttoning his great-coat to the chin. ‘ But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.’ ”

Even law clerks worked on until eight o’clock or so at night, having begun at half-past nine or ten in the morning.

It is, indeed, difficult to “ place ” the social status of the City clerk ; he was of a race now extinct. There were the



JUVENILE FETE AND BALLOON RACE AT CREMORNE GARDENS IN 1859

“out and out” young men who walked in from Camden Town or Islington in the morning, dined at a “slap-bang” restaurant and, after the office was over, made a night of it at the theatre or public-house. Of such were Messrs. Potter and Smithers. The latter “generally appeared in public in a surtout and shoes, with a narrow black neckerchief and a brown hat, very much turned up at the sides—peculiarities which Mr. Potter wholly eschewed, for it was his ambition to do something in the celebrated ‘kiddy’ or stage-coach way, and he had even gone so far as to invest capital in the purchase of a rough blue coat with wooden buttons, made upon the fireman’s principle, in which, with the addition of a low-crowned, flower-pot-saucer-shaped hat, he had created no inconsiderable stir at the Albion in Little Russell Street, and divers other places of public and fashionable resort.”—(*Boz.*)

Of the same breed were the Pickwickian law-clerks, Messrs. Jackson, Wicks and Lowten: “It was half-past four when I got to Somers Town,” narrated Mr. Wicks, “and then I was so uncommon lushy that I couldn’t find the place where the latch-key went in and was obliged to knock up the old ‘ooman.”

Less roystering, but no whit more refined were Guppy and his friends, Smallweed and Jobling, though the first of these, strange to say, developed into a full-blown solicitor.

“‘I *have* some connexion,’ pursued Mr. Guppy, ‘and it lays in the direction of Walcot Square, Lambeth. I have therefore taken a ouse in that locality, and intend setting up professionally for myself, there, forthwith. . . . It’s a six-roomer, exclusive of kitchens, and in the opinion of my friends, a commodious tenement. When I mention my friends, I refer principally to my friend Jobling, who I believe has known me,’ Mr. Guppy looked at him with a sentimental air, ‘from boyhood’s hour?’

“Mr. Jobling confirmed this, with a sliding movement of his legs.

“‘My friend Jobling will render me his assistance in the capacity of clerk, and will live in the ouse,’ said Mr. Guppy. ‘My mother will likewise live in the ouse, when her present quarter in the Old Street Road shall have ceased and expired; and consequently there will be no want of society.’”—(*Bleak House*, 64.)

The mention of Mr. Jobling naturally leads us to another type of city clerk, the aspirant to fashion, “ ‘Fashion and whiskers have been my weaknesses, and I don’t care who knows it,’ said Jobling. ‘They are great weaknesses—Damme, sir, they are great.’ ”

“ But what Mr. Jobling prizes most, of all his few possessions (next after his light whiskers, for which he has an attachment that only whiskers can awaken in the breast of man), is a choice collection of copper-plate impressions from that truly national work, *The Divinities of Albion*, or *Galaxy Gallery of British Beauty*, representing ladies of title and fashion in every variety of smirk that art, combined with capital, is capable of producing. With these magnificent portraits, he decorates his apartment; and as the *Galaxy Gallery of British Beauty* wears every variety of fancy-dress, plays every variety of musical instrument, fondles every variety of dog, ogles every variety of prospect, and is backed up by every variety of flower-pot and balustrade, the result is very imposing.

“ But, fashion is Tony Jobling’s weakness. To borrow yesterday’s paper from the *Sol’s Arms* of an evening, and read about the brilliant and distinguished meteors that are shooting across the fashionable sky in every direction, is unspeakable consolation to him. To know what member of what brilliant and distinguished circle accomplished the brilliant and distinguished feat of joining it yesterday, or contemplates the no less brilliant and distinguished feat of leaving it to-morrow, gives him a thrill of joy. To be informed what the *Galaxy Gallery of British Beauty* is about, and means to be about, and what *Galaxy* marriages are on the tapis, and what *Galaxy* rumours are in circulation, is to become acquainted with the most glorious destinies of mankind. He reverts from this intelligence, to the *Galaxy* portraits implicated; and seems to know the originals, and to know of them.”

More humdrum were elderly clerks of the *Bob Cratchit* and *R. Wilfer* class. Poor and unambitious, or maybe their ambition had been killed by small salaries and large families, they jogged along on miserable wages of a pound a week or less, with no hope for the future nor much consolation for the present. Not all of them had pretty daughters who

married wealthy heroes, nor found their master's heart softened by a Christmas nightmare.

I can't resist a passing mention of that most gorgeous of clerks—would that human nature could produce his like—Dick Swiveller :

“ ‘ Perhaps you'd like a bit of cake, ’—said Dick, at last turning to the dwarf.

“ ‘ You're quite welcome to it. You ought to be, for it's of your making. ’

“ ‘ What do you mean ? ’ said Quilp.

“ Mr. Swiveller replied by taking from his pocket a small and very greasy parcel, slowly unfolding it, and displaying a little slab of plum-cake extremely indigestible in appearance, and bordered with a paste of white sugar an inch and a half deep.

“ ‘ What should you say this was ? ’ demanded Mr. Swiveller.

“ ‘ It looke like bride-cake, ’ replied the dwarf, grinning.

“ ‘ And whose should you say it was ? ’ inquired Mr. Swiveller, rubbing the pastry against his nose with a dreadful calmness. ‘ Whose ? ’

“ ‘ Not——’

“ ‘ Yes, ’ said Dick, ‘ the same. You needn't mention her name. There's no such name now. Her name is Cheggs now, Sophy Cheggs. Yet loved I as man never loved that hadn't wooden legs, and my heart, my heart is breaking for the love of Sophy Cheggs. ’

“ With this extemporary adaptation of a popular ballad to the distressing circumstances of his own case, Mr. Swiveller folded up the parcel again, beat it very flat between the palms of his hands, thrust it into his breast, buttoned his coat over it, and folded his arms upon the whole.

“ ‘ Now, I hope you're satisfied, sir, ’ said Dick ; ‘ and I hope Fred's satisfied. You went partners in the mischief, and I hope you like it. This is the triumph I was to have, is it ? It's like the old country-dance of that name, where there are two gentlemen to one lady, and one has her, and the other hasn't, but comes limping up behind to make out the figure. But it's Destiny, and mine's a crusher ! ’ ”

This has nothing to do with my subject, however, but neither has Dick.

The London Chop House—now vanished save for a few old houses in quiet courts—was a feature of London, with its sanded floor, its wooden pews and hard benches, the roaring fire at one end where the cook presided over sizzling chops and steaks and kept a precautionary eye upon patrons who preferred to carve themselves a portion from the joint. As Sam Weller records of the gentleman “as killed his-self on principle :” “he din’d ev’ry day at the same place, where it was one and nine to cut off the joint, and a verry good one and nine’s worth he used to cut, as the landlord often said, with the tears a tricklin’ down his face : let alone the way he used to poke the fire in the vinter time, which was a dead loss o’ four-pence ha’penny a day : to say nothin’ at all o’ the aggrawation o’ seein’ him do it. So uncommon grand with it too ! ‘ Post arter the next gen’l’m’n,’ he sings out ev’ry day ven he comes in. ‘ See arter the *Times*, Thomas ; let me look at the *Mornin’ Herald*, wen it’s out o’ hand ; don’t forget to bespeak the *Chronicle* ; and just bring the ‘*Tizer*, vill you : ’ and then he’d set vith his eyes fixed on the clock, and rush out, just a quarter of a minit afore the time, to waylay the boy as was a comin’ in with the evenin’ paper, wich he’d read with sich intense interest and persewerance as worked the other customers up to the verry confines o’ desperation and insanity, ’specially one i-rascible old gen’l’m’n as the vaiter was always obliged to keep a sharp eye on, at sich times, fear he should be tempted to commit some rash act with the carving-knife.”

The Cheshire Cheese in Fleet Street is the best-known and easiest discovered of the few surviving chop houses and is, perhaps, the only one where the interior has not been radically altered these hundred years and more. Of those which have gone, the best known were the Salutation and Cat, in Newgate Street, which was famous for its three-course dinner at eighteenpence and its hot suppers ; Dolly’s Chop House, in Queen’s Head Passage, Paternoster Row, where the best beef-steaks and gill ales in London could be obtained ; the Cock, Fleet Street—not the present building but the old one which stood on the spot now occupied by the Temple Bar branch of the Bank of England—so well described by Mr. Leopold Wagner : “ After threading one’s way through a long and narrow passage . . . the little window of the bar presented

itself, and within that sanctum sat the hostess to whom came waiters with orders for steaks, kidneys, stout, or port, the money equivalent of which she chalked on the mahogany sill of the door. Snug and comfortable to a degree was the public-room, with a low ceiling, sawdusted floor, tiny window-panes, and boxes or pews topped by green curtains, not to speak of a roaring fire in winter and a huge kettle singing on the hob ! ”

Bucklersbury was famous for eating-houses of a rather cheaper kind where the City Clerk could obtain meals better suited to his purse. “ The waiter recites a bill of fare in a rather confidential manner—for the diner is a regular customer—and after enquiring ‘ What’s in the best cut ? ’ and ‘ What was up last ? ’ the latter orders a small plate of roast beef, with greens and a half-a-pint of porter. He has a small plate to-day because greens are a penny more than potatoes, and he had ‘ two breads ’ yesterday, with the additional enormity of ‘ a cheese ’ the day before. Exactly at five minutes before the hour is up, he produces a shilling, pays the reckoning, carefully deposits the change in his waistcoat pocket (first deducting a penny for the waiter) and returns to the office.”

Somewhat after this style, only noisier and more showy, were the Slap-Bang Dining Houses, always thronged with patrons : “ Into the Dining House, unaffected by the seductive show in the window, of artificially whitened cauliflowers and poultry, verdant baskets of peas, coolly blooming cucumbers, and joints ready for the spit, Mr. Smallweed leads the way. They know him there, and defer to him. He has his favourite box, he bespeaks all the papers, he is down upon bald patriarchs, who keep them more than ten minutes afterwards. It is of no use trying him with anything less than a fullsized ‘ bread,’ or proposing to him any joint in cut, unless it is in the very best cut. In the matter of gravy he is adamant.”

When it came to settling the bill : “ Mr. Smallweed, compelling the attendance of the waitress with one hitch of his eyelash, instantly replies as follows : ‘ Four veals and hams is three, and four potatoes is three and four, and one summer cabbage is three and six, and three marrow is four and six, and six breads is five, and three Cheshires is five and three, and

four pints of half-and-half is six and three, and four small rums is eight and three, and three Pollys is eight and six. Eight and six in half a sovereign, Polly, and eighteenpence out ! ' '—(*Bleak House*, 20.)

It is impossible to leave the subject of meals and clerks without a reference to the fare then provided in the City boarding-houses—long since migrated to Bloomsbury and Earls Court where they call themselves Hotels or Hostels. How Mrs. Todgers's meals compare with her successors' let those with experience decide. Incidentally, what a fortune is waiting for the boarding-house keeper who can provide a Bailey Junior for her guests !

" ' I say,' he whispered, ' young ladies, there's soup to-morrow. She's a making it now. An't she a putting in the water ? Oh ! not at all neither ! ' "

" In the course of answering another knock, he thrust in his head again.

" ' I say ! There's fowls to-morrow. Not skinny ones. Oh no ! ' "

" Presently he called through the key-hole :

" ' There's a fish to-morrow. Just come. Don't eat none of him ! ' And, with this special warning, vanished again."

When the hour arrived " dinner was announced by Bailey Junior on these terms : ' The wittles is up ! ' "

" Mr. Pecksniff said grace : a short and pious grace, invoking a blessing on the appetites of those present, and committing all persons who had nothing to eat, to the care of Providence : whose business (so said the grace, in effect) it clearly was, to look after them. This done, they fell to, with less ceremony than appetite ; the table groaning beneath the weight, not only of the delicacies whereof the Miss Pecksniffs had been previously forewarned, but of boiled beef, roast veal, bacon, pies, and abundance of such heavy vegetables as are favourably known to housekeepers for their satisfying qualities. Besides which, there were bottles of stout, bottles of wine, bottles of ale, and divers other strong drinks, native and foreign.

" The dessert was splendid. No waiting either. The pudding-plates had been washed in a little tub outside the door while cheese was on, and though they were moist

HAIR MEMENTOS.—ARTIST in HAIR.—DEWDNEY sends to Ladies resident in any part of the Kingdom a BOOK of SPECIMENS for Two Postage Stamps. He also beautifully makes, and elegantly mounts in fine gold, Hair Bracelets, Brooches, Rings, Chains, &c. at charges the most moderate. —DEWDNEY, 172, Fenchurch-street, London.

PHOTOGRAPHY.—CLAUDET'S DAGUERRETYPE PORTRAITS taken daily at the ROYAL ADELAIDE GALLERY. The wonderful art by which perfect likenesses are taken in a few seconds has lately received very important improvements, and has arrived to such perfection, that former productions, however extraordinary they are, cannot be compared with the new specimens produced by M. Claudet, and which are exhibited at the Adelaide Gallery. These pictures are fixed, and do not fade.—Price of a single portrait, One Guinea, upon plates $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch; and Five Guineas, upon plates $\frac{3}{4}$ by $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; intermediate sizes in proportion. Colouring from 5s. to 10s. Duplicates at half price; and inferior portraits, produced by the old process, exchanged without any charge.

THE POLKA COLLAR.—The only Gentleman's Collar that fits perfectly with a one-round Cravat. It is made to show all round, or to open behind. To be obtained of all Hosiery and Drapers, and the trade supplied by all who dress houses.

LADIES and GENTLEMEN, Read This.—FALSE HAIR of every description sent safe by Post.—Invisible Curls on Shell Side-Combs, for 9s.—a new and splendid invention. The best Gentlemen's Wigs, 50s. Curls on German Side-Combs, 3s 6d. Ladies' Fronts, with a four-inch Skin Parting, 7s 6d and 10s. Widow's Bands, 2s and 10s. Hair Flairs, 7s 6d.—By G. BROWN, Perfumer and Hairdresser, 9, Skinner-street, Show-hill, many years with Gibbous, of 7, King-street, St. James's.

LADIES, whether frequenting the crowded saloon, the close assembly, the rural ride, or drive, the summer promenade, or the aquatic excursion, will find in ROWLAND'S KALYDOR a renovating and refreshing auxiliary, dispelling the cloud of languor from the complexion, and immediately affording the pleasing sensation attending restored elasticity of the Skin. The distressing and unsightly varieties of Cutaneous Eruptions, as well as Sunburns, Freckles, Discolorations, and Sallowness, yield to its specific qualities, and are succeeded by a clearness and softness of the skin truly grateful to its possessor. Its invaluable properties have obtained its selection by the Court, and the Royal Family of Great Britain, and those of the Continent of Europe, together with the whole elite of the aristocracy and haute ton. Price 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. per bottle—ask for "ROWLAND'S KALYDOR," all others are Fraudulent Counterfeits.

GOOD FEMALE SERVANTS are obtained at the CITY DOMESTICS' BAZAAR, 33, Ludgate-hill, which is conducted by a lady of great respectability. Servants with good characters will find it the best office to get a respectable situation. Open from Ten till Four, Saturdays excepted.

LUXURIANT WHISKERS & MOUSTACHES.

Hundreds can now testify to the wonderful success of
FOX'S NOTED FORMULA,
Which guarantees Whiskers, &c., to grow heavily in six weeks on the smoothest face, without injuring the skin, and a sure Remedy for Baldness.

THIRTEEN STAMPS.

Mr. J. FOX, Macclesfield, Cheshire.

Caution.—Note Name and Address.

CRINOLINE.—The Patent ONDINA, or Waxed JUPON, does away with the unsightly results of the ordinary hoops; and no perfect are the wavy lines, and a lady may ascend a steep stair, lean against a table, throw herself into an armchair, pass to her stall at the opera, or occupy a fourth seat in a carriage, without inconvenience to herself or others, or provoking the rude remarks of the observers, thus modifying in an important degree all those peculiarities tending to destroy the modesty of English women; and, lastly, it allows the dress to fall into graceful folds. Price 15s. 6d. 25s. and 35s. 6d. Illustrations free.
E. PHILPOT, 37, Piccadilly, W.

BOARDING SCHOOL FOR YOUNG GENTLEMEN—Ten Miles from London by Railway.—Terms, 18, 20, or 22 guineas per annum. No extras. The quarter is kept at entrance. Prizes supply the place of severity; and a hundred respectable housekeepers in the city of London will cheerfully bear witness to the excellence of the diet and system of education. Mothers, have your children led, not driven; taught, not told to learn. For prospectuses, address G. M. F., Post-office, Croydon.—A young gentleman required as articled pupil, age 15 or 16.

WALLEY and HARDWICK'S REGISTERED DUPALLA, Patrons by her Majesty.—This improvement on the Mantle or Visite is the most perfect and tastefully embellished integument in modern vesting, and has the recommendation of being purely English in design and manufacture. Prices extremely moderate. "It adapts itself to the graceful lineaments of the form with a bewitchment scarcely expressible."—Morning Post, May 11, 1848. "It is certainly a very exquisitely made and most graceful garment."—Standard, May 10, 1848. "It is made free for the arms, sits to the figure with a completeness we have never before noticed in any other garment, and has the most agreeable quality of improving the carriage of the wearer."—Globe, May 10, 1848. "The most novel garment of the day."—St. James's Chronicle, May 11, 1848. "It is the most elegant and becoming of the vast variety of Mantlets of the day."—Lady's Newspaper, May 13, 1848.

TO LADIES.—WALLER'S PRICE-LIST of HAIR PLATES lower than any other house in the kingdom. Best-iron on application. Coronets, well made, 2s. 6d., 3s., and 5s. All-round Frizzettes, 18s. 3d., 2s. 6d., and 3s. each. Carriage-free on receipt of amount in stamps, and colour of hair.—W. Waller, Couturier, 90, Great College-street, Camden New-town, N.W.

UMBRELLAS.—"The Protector."—Registered March 28, 1848.—The attention of the public is respectfully requested to the above design, the utility of which is obvious, from the fact that the owner, by unscrewing the handle, renders it useless to any but himself; as it is notorious that UMBRELLAS are more frequently misappropriated than any other article.—Sole manufacturer, GEORGE JACOBS (late BARTY), 32, Cockspur-street, Charing-cross.—Ladies' Umbrellas, ivory handles, from 7s. 6d. each; Gentlemen's ditto, of a new fabric (equal in appearance to silk), and of extreme durability, from 10s. 6d.

ARCHERY—Every requisite of the above amusement at considerably reduced prices, and of the best description.—Parasols, Whips, Canes, &c.

DO YOU SUFFER TOOTHACHE? If so, use BRAND'S ENAMEL for filling the decayed spots. An instant and permanent cure, requiring no tedious and painful treatment. The same as said by Dentists at 2s. 6d. Sold by Chemists Everywhere, price 1s.; London, wholesale by all the medicine houses.

THE MOST LADY-LIKE HEAD-DRESSES of the Season are now Velvet Coronets and Rosettes, in Scarlet, Flax, Pink and White, Green, Blue, Brown, Violet, &c. Coronets, 1s. 9d., Rosettes, 1s. 6d. and elegant hairnets, with single roseties, 1s. 9d.; De. 6d., 2s. 3d.; 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. All post-free for stamps.
LAKEL and CREW, 198, Regent-street, London.

PROTOBOLIC HATS.—This invention involves the principle of perfect ventilation to the crown of a hat by means of a valve, a d series of air conductors, obviating all the inconvenience of an ordinary hat.
JOHN NUN and CO., Patentees, Hatters to her Majesty and Royal Family, 113, Regent-street, corner of Vigo-street.

CORNS, BUNIONS, &c.—Mrs. HARRIS begs to call the attention of the Nobility and Gentry to her very easy method of removing Corns and Bunions without causing the slightest pain or inconvenience. Mrs. H. can be consulted at her residence, 98, Albany-street, Regent's-park, after Two daily.

FOUR FIRES FOR ONE PENNY!!! by EDWARD'S PATENT FIREWOOD. It lights instantly, and saves Money, Time, and Trouble. Sold by Chimney and Grocers. Families in the country supplied with 500, delivered to the carrier, on receipt of a Post-office Order, 10s., payable to T. STEVENSON, 18, Wharf-road, City-road. N.B.—The only proper fuel for the bachelors' kettle and summer kettles. 1st size, 3 pints; 2nd size, 6 pints.

and warm with friction, still there they were again, up to the mark, and true to time. Quarts of almonds; dozens of oranges; pounds of raisins; stacks of biffins; soup-plates full of nuts. Oh, Todgers's could do it when it chose! Mind that.

“Then more wine came on; red wines and white wines; and a large china bowl of punch, brewed by the gentleman of a convivial turn, who adjured the Miss Pecksniffs not to be despondent on account of its dimensions, as there were materials in the house for the decoction of half a dozen more of the same size.”—(*Chuzzlewit*, 9.)

The greater part of the clerk population lived in what were then the outlying suburbs of Camden and Kentish Towns, Islington and Pentonville; the southern suburbs of Camberwell and Kennington, Walworth and Bermondsey were less favoured. All these places were within walking distance of the City, but for those who could afford it, a fairly good system of short-stage coaches and omnibuses plied within a radius of ten or twelve miles of the Bank. Places in these vehicles were usually reserved for regular travellers, mostly elderly City men residing in Peckham, Brixton, Chelsea, Hackney or other more distant suburbs, who occupied the same seat every morning in the same 'bus.

As late as the mid '60s, all the main roads from London were bordered with houses for some miles—good substantial houses such as are still to be seen on Brixton Hill or in Hampstead. These were occupied by comfortably off, if not actually rich, City men who found a new pleasure in life in improving their little semi-rural property.

“If the regular City man,” says Boz, “who leaves Lloyd's at five o'clock and drives home to Hackney, Clapton, Stamford Hill, or elsewhere, can be said to have any daily recreation beyond his dinner, it is his garden. He never does anything to it with his own hands; but he takes great pride in it notwithstanding; and if you are desirous of paying your addresses to the youngest daughter, be sure to be in raptures with every flower and shrub it contains. If your poverty of expression compel you to make any distinction between the two, we should certainly recommend your bestowing more admiration on his garden than on his wine. He always takes a walk round it before he starts for town in the morning, and is par-

ticularly anxious that the fish-pond should be kept specially neat. If you call on Sunday in Summer time, about an hour before dinner, you will find him sitting in an arm-chair, on the lawn, behind the house, with a straw-hat on, reading a Sunday paper. A short distance from him you will most likely observe a handsome paroquet in a large, brass-wire cage; ten to one but the eldest two girls are loitering in one of the side-walks accompanied by a couple of young gentlemen, who are holding parasols over them—of course only to keep the sun off—while the younger children, with the under-nurserymaid, are strolling listlessly about, in the shade."

Between these pleasantly-bordered main roads in South London or in the Western districts of Kensington and Bayswater were green fields or market gardens and flower gardens; but all along the north was "a tract of suburban Sahara, where tiles and bricks were burned, bones were boiled, carpets were beat, rubbish was shot, dogs were fought and dust was heaped by contractors. . . . It is neither of the town nor country. The former, like the giant in his travelling boots, has made a stride and passed it, and has set his brick-and-mortar heel a long way in advance; but the intermediate space between the giant's feet, as yet, is only blighted country, and not town; and, here, among a few tall chimneys belching smoke all day and night, and among the brick-fields and the lanes where turf is cut, and where the fences tumble down, and where the dusty nettles grow, and where a scrap or two of hedge may yet be seen, the bird-catcher still comes occasionally."—(*Bleak House & Dombey*.)

Amid surroundings like these, or in the rows of small houses which constitute such places as Camden Town or Kennington, lived the Wilfers and the Lowtens, the Wemmicks and the Guppies, before better education, better wages, and above all, that *ignis fatuus* of the period, respectability, sent them, farther afield, to make suburban towns of Penge, Norwood, Earls Court and the rest.

As a fitting close to this chapter, I reproduce the domestic budget of a comparatively well-to-do clerk, head of a department in a bank, for the year 1844:

	£	s.	d.
House Rent	25	0	0
Taxes	5	0	0
Maid of all Work	7	0	0
Coals, 5 tons @ 25s.	6	5	0
Candles, 35s. ; Wood, 5s.	2	0	0
Tea, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. a week @ 6s.	7	16	6
Sugar, lump and moist @ 2s. 7d. a week.	6	14	2
Butter, 2s. a week ; Eggs 6d. a week	9	12	0
Meat, 16 lb. a week @ 6d. per lb.	18	6	0
Fish	2	0	0
Vegetables, potatoes @ 4 lb. for 2d.	5	0	0
Beer, 2s. 6d. a week	6	10	0
Washing, a woman once a week @ 1s. 6d., soap and her meals, 55s.. . . .	6	13	0
Ironing and mangling	1	0	0
Dress, husband £11, 6s. ; wife, £9 ; 2 chil- dren, £3	23	6	0
Doctor's Bill	5	0	0
Church's offerings and charity	3	10	0
Odds and Ends	1	8	0
Excursions and Amusements	1	19	4
Savings	6	0	0
Total	£150	0	0

CHAPTER V

ON THE ROAD

A Coach ride at Night—Mail and Stage-Coaches—Discomforts of Insides—Time-keeping—Winter Weather—Booking Office—The Coachman—The Guard—Post-Chaise—The Turnpikes—Wayfarers—Golden Cross Hotel—The Saracen's Head—The White Hart—Country Inns—The Great White Horse—The Jolly Sandboys.

“THE coach was none of your steady-going, yokel coaches, but a swaggering, rakish, dissipated London coach; up all night, and lying by all day, and leading a devil of a life. It cared no more for Salisbury than if it had been a hamlet. It rattled noisily through the best streets, defied the Cathedral, took the worst corners sharpest, went cutting in everywhere, making everything get out of its way; and spun along the open country-road, blowing a lively defiance out of its key-bugle, as its last glad parting legacy.

“It was a charming evening. Mild and bright. The four grays skimmed along, as if they liked it quite as well as Tom Pinch did; the bugle was in as high spirits as the grays; the coachman chimed in sometimes with his voice; the wheels hummed cheerfully in unison; the brass work on the harness was an orchestra of little bells; and thus, as they went clinking, jingling, rattling smoothly on, the whole concern, from the buckles of the leaders' coupling-reins, to the handle of the hind boot, was one great instrument of music.

“Yoho, past hedges, gates, and trees; past cottages and barns, and people going home from work. Yoho, past donkey-chaises, drawn aside into the ditch, and empty carts with rampant horses, whipped up at a bound upon the little watercourse, and held by struggling carters close to the five-barred gate, until the coach had passed the narrow turning in the road. Yoho, by churches dropped down by themselves in quiet nooks, with rustic burial-grounds about them, where the graves are green, and daisies sleep—for it is evening—on the bosoms of the dead. Yoho, past streams, in

which the cattle cool their feet, and where the rushes grow ; past paddock-fences, farms, and rick-yards ; past last year's stacks, cut, slice by slice, away, and showing, in the waning light, like ruined gables, old and brown. Yoho, down the pebbly dip, and through the merry water-splash, and up at a canter to the level road again. Yoho ! Yoho !

“Yoho, among the gathering shades ; making of no account the deep reflections of the trees, but scampering on through light and darkness, all the same, as if the light of London fifty miles away, were quite enough to travel by, and some to spare. Yoho, beside the village-green, where cricket-players linger yet, and every little indentation made in the fresh grass by bat or wicket, ball or player's foot, sheds out its perfume on the night. Away with four fresh horses from the Bald-faced Stag, where toppers congregate about the door admiring ; and the last team with traces hanging loose, go roaming off towards the pond, until observed and shouted after by a dozen throats, while volunteering boys pursue them. Now, with a clattering of hoofs and striking out of fiery sparks, across the old stone bridge, and down again into the shadowy road, and through the open gate, and far away, away, into the wold. Yoho !

“Yoho, behind there, stop that bugle for a moment ! Come creeping over to the front, along the coach-roof, guard, and make one at this basket ! Not that we slacken in our pace the while, not we : we rather put the bits of blood upon their metal, for the greater glory of the snack. Ah ! It is long since this bottle of old wine was brought into contact with the mellow breath of night, you may depend, and rare good stuff it is to wet a bugler's whistle with. Only try it. Don't be afraid of turning up your finger, Bill, another pull ! Now, take your breath, and try the bugle, Bill. There's music ! There's a tone ! ‘Over the hills and far away,’ indeed. Yoho ! The skittish mare is all alive to-night. Yoho ! Yoho !

“The beauty of the night is hardly felt, when day comes leaping up. Yoho ! Two stages, and the country roads are almost changed to a continuous street. Yoho, past market-gardens, rows of houses, villas, crescents, terraces and squares ; past wagons, coaches, carts ; past early workmen, late stragglers, drunken men, and sober carriers of loads ; past

brick and mortar in its every shape ; and in among the rattling pavements, where a jaunty-seat upon a coach is not so easy to preserve ! Yoho, down countless turnings, and through countless mazy ways, until an old Inn-yard is gained, and Tom Pinch, getting down, quite stunned and giddy, is in London ! ”—(*Chuzzlewit*, 36.)

Never had the roads of England been in more perfect condition—so smooth and hard that “ nothing bigger than a nutmeg,”—in the way of stones, was to be found upon them ; never had coaches been better built, better horsed, better driven ; never had inns been more flourishing, than in the days immediately preceding the extension of the railways.

The coaching system had, indeed, been brought as near perfection as possible, the services were adequately catered for, and the penalties for keeping bad time were so heavy that coaches usually ran with that punctuality we were once accustomed to associate with railway trains.

There were two types of fast coach upon the road and with the exception of the wealthy, who usually travelled in their own carriages or by post-chaise, and of the very poor, who were obliged to make use of the lumbering old wagons and slow night coaches, all passenger traffic was conveyed by Mail or Stage-coach.

Stage and Mail coaches were alike in build, carrying four inside passengers and ten or twelve outsides. Mail-bags were piled high on the roof, and luggage was carried in large receptacles called boots at either end of the vehicle. The box-seat by the coachman, usually charged extra, was considered the most desirable and was frequently occupied by someone interested in horse-flesh, such as the “ gentleman with a very unpromising squint, and a prominent chin, who had a tall white hat on with a narrow flat brim, and whose close-fitting drab trousers seemed to button all the way up outside his legs from his boots to his hips,” and who observed to David Copperfield, “ ‘ There ain’t no sort of orse that I ain’t bred, and no sort of dorg. Orses and dorgs is some men’s fancy. They’re wittles and drink to me—lodging, wife and children—reading, writing and ’rithmetic—snuff, tobacker and sleep.’ ”

Mail coaches, which were subsidised or owned by the Post Office, were painted uniformly, the lower part of the body

being chocolate or mauve ; the upper part as well as the fore and hind boots, black ; the wheels and under carriage a vivid scarlet. The Royal arms were emblazoned on the doors, the Royal cipher in gold upon the fore-boot and the number of the vehicle on the hind boot. The panels at each side of the window were embellished with various devices such as the badge of the Garter, the rose, shamrock or thistle.

Stage-coaches, on the other hand, were gay with brilliant colours, and were inscribed with the names of the principal towns they touched or with which they made connection. Each had a distinctive name—Tally-Ho, Defiance, Rapid, Telegraph, Comet or the like, and bore the proprietor's name on the door : “ There, sure enough, in gilt letters of a goodly size, was the magic name PICKWICK.

“ ‘ Dear me,’ exclaimed Mr. Pickwick, quite staggered by the coincidence, ‘ what a very extraordinary thing ! ’

“ ‘ Yes, but that ain’t all,’ said Sam, again directing his master’s attention to the coach door, ‘ not content with writin’ up Pickwick, they puts “ Moses ” afore it ! ’ ”

Moses Pickwick was, as a matter of fact, an extremely well-known coach proprietor at Bath, who owned the White Hart Inn in that city and ran coaches to London, Bristol and many other West of England towns.

For travelling at night or in bad weather, the inside was, of course, the most comfortable, so far as any comfort could be attained in such a situation—“ for,” as Mr. Pecksniff justly observed—when he and his daughters had burrowed their feet deep in the straw, wrapped themselves to the chin and pulled up both windows—“ it is always satisfactory to feel in keen weather that many other people are not as warm as you are.” But travelling inside was far from luxurious, for “ the tendency of mankind when it falls asleep in coaches is to wake up cross—to find its legs in its way and its corns no aggravation. and the long night hours wore away in the usual manner. Mr. Pecksniff and old Anthony kept tumbling against each other and waking up much terrified, or crushed their heads in opposite corners of the coach, and strangely tattooed their faces—Heaven knows how—in their sleep. The coach stopped and went on and stopped times out of number. Passengers got up and passengers got down, and

fresh horses came and went and came again, with scarcely any interval between each team, as it seemed to those who were dozing, and with a gap of a whole night between every one, as it seemed to those who were awake.”—(*Chuzzlewit*.)

The departure of the Mails was one of the sights of London. On its outward journey each coach collected passengers from whatever inn the vehicle was horsed at, and then dashed round at 8 P.M. to St. Martin's le Grand to collect the mail. Coaches were summoned by name to receive their bags—Lincoln, Ipswich, Portsmouth, etc., and the crash of the lid of the boot locked down on the special mails was the signal for each coach to speed away through the crowded streets, to the confusion and terror of all other traffic, pedestrian or otherwise that chanced to be in the way. “They come racing out of Lad Lane and Wood Street at twelve and fourteen miles an hour, them Mails do. The only wonder is that people ain't killed oftener by them Mails. They're a public nuisance, them Mails is,” as a passer-by remarked to Arthur Clennam.

Fast Stage and Mail coaches made their journeys in about the same time. It took 5 hours to Brighton, 2 hours longer to Southampton, 17 hours to Exeter, 15 to Shrewsbury, 19 to Manchester, 27 to Holyhead and 21 to Liverpool. This worked out at an average speed of 10 miles an hour and everything was done to keep up this rate. The coaches, besides galloping against each other, were running perpetual races against time, for when unpunctuality was punished with heavy penalties and loss of credit, every minute was precious. The half-thoroughbred horses were kept in the pink of condition and during their stage of seven or eight miles, were worked for every ounce they were worth. The steadier wheelers were supposed to act as checks on their leaders, but more often than not the driver gave the wheelers their heads and the whole team dashed along at full gallop. If an accident occurred, it was usually a nasty one—not like Mr. Weller's little electioneering episode when his coach was upset and the passengers subjected to little worse than an unexpected sousing. If the wheel caught the corner of a bridge or a stone post at some sharp turning, the unlucky outsides were usually sent flying, into the water, through cottage windows or against house walls as Fate might ordain,

and broken limbs, if not mortal injuries, were not infrequently the penalties of an accident.

The best drivers could not, of course, avoid the perils of the winter snowstorms, so romantic in the coloured prints of the period, but exceptionally unpleasant to those involved. Coaches carrying mails were under an obligation to continue their journeys against almost insuperable difficulties and, as Charley found in the journey which eventually landed him at the Holy Tree Inn, drivers and guards were not to be daunted by heavy odds. Roads across commons were the especial points of danger, for the drifting snow soon covered road, ditch and field with an even mantle and not even the most experienced coachman could tell when he had left his road. "The night and the snow came on together and dismal enough they were. There was no sound to be heard but the howling of the wind ; for the noise of the wheels and the tread of the horses' feet were rendered inaudible by the thick coating of snow which covered the ground and was fast increasing every moment. . . . The outside passengers wrapped themselves more closely in their coats and pillowed themselves against the luggage and prepared, with many half-suppressed groans, again to encounter the piercing blast which swept across the open country. They were little more than a mile outside Grantham or about half-way between it and Newark, when Nicholas, who had been asleep for a short time, was suddenly roused by a violent jerk which nearly threw him from his seat. Grasping the rail, he found that the coach had sunk greatly on one side, though it was still dragged forward by the horses ; and while—confused by their plunging and the loud screams of the lady inside—he hesitated for an instant whether to jump off or not, the vehicle turned easily over and relieved him from all further uncertainty by flinging him into the road."—(*Nickleby*, 5.)

In really severe weather the sufferings of the outside passengers were terrible. When the Bath Mail changed horses at Chippenham, early one March morning, two of the outsides were found frozen dead, while a third expired soon afterwards. Postboys were frequently lifted out of their saddles at the point of death.

The winter of 1836 was, perhaps, the severest known in England of comparatively recent years, and the terrific

storms of the Christmas season closed the whole of the coach roads for several days. On December the 26th, the Manchester, Holyhead, Chester and Halifax Mails were all stuck in snow drifts at Hockley Hill, near Dunstable, within a few yards of one another, and throughout the country stories of overturned coaches and dogged heroism on the part of coachmen and guards were recounted. In one instance a guard, leaving his snow-bound coach, carried out instructions by taking the mails forward on horseback. Nine miles farther on he sent the horse back, but pushed forward himself with the bag of letters. Next morning he was found dead, a mile or two farther along the road, frozen and stiff, with the mail-bag still tied round his neck.

Change of horses at each fresh stage was effected in almost incredibly short time. Hostlers and stable-boys were allowed a minute in which to take out the old horses and harness up the fresh team, but it was no unusual thing for them to effect this in fifty seconds. There were, of course, backers and bolters, among the beasts, and exciting adventures occasionally took place with some recalcitrant wheeler who would insist upon lying down and was only to be moved by a fire of straw lit under his very nose. Once he did start, however, the driver took it out of him before the stage was over !

Places by coach had to be secured in advance at the inn from which the coach started or where it stopped on the road. The traveller's name was entered in a book and half the fare taken as deposit. The fares by stage-coach worked out at 2½d. to 3d. a mile outside, and 4d. to 5d. a mile for inside passengers. Mail-coaches were dearer, averaging from 4½d. to 5d. for outsides and 8d. to 10d. for insides.

The booking-office at the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, was typical or even better than most, though even that was "A mouldy looking room, ornamented with large posting bills ; the greater part of the place enclosed behind a huge lumbering rough counter, and fitted up with recesses that look like the dens of the smaller animals in a menagerie, without the bars. Some half-dozen people are ' booking ' brown paper parcels which one of the clerks flings into the aforesaid recesses with an air of recklessness, which you, remembering the new carpet-bag you bought in the morning, feel considerably annoyed



Family Fashions in 1851



The most exclusive Paris modes for September, 1864
CRINOLINES AT THEIR GREATEST

at ; porters, looking like so many Atlases, keep rushing in and out with large packages on their shoulders ; and while you are waiting to make the necessary enquiries, you wonder what on earth the booking-clerks can have been before they were booking-clerks. Your turn comes at last, and having paid the fare, you tremblingly enquire : ‘ What time will it be necessary for me to be here in the morning ? ’—‘ Six o’clock,’ replies the other, carelessly pitching the sovereign you have just parted with into a wooden bowl on the desk. ‘ Rather before than arter,’ adds a man, standing in front of the fire, with just as much ease and complacency as if the whole world got out of bed at five. . . .”

It will be easily imagined that the coachmen and guards formed a race apart from mankind. “ A coachman’s a privileged indiidual,” observed Mr. Tony Weller. “ A coachman may do without suspicion wot other men may not ; a coachman may be on the very amicablest terms with eighty mile o’ females, and yet nobody think that he ever means to marry any vun among ’em. And wot other man can say the same ? A regular coachman’s a sort o’ connectin’ link betwixt singleness and matrimony. Vy it is that long-stage coachmen possess such insiniuations, and is always looked up to—adored I may say—by ev’ry young ’ooman in ev’ry town he vurks through, I don’t know ; I only know that so it is ; it’s a reg’lation of natur—a dispensary.”

Latterly the respect and admiration they met with, not only from the “ eighty mile o’ females ” but from the men, turned the heads of the younger generation of coachmen who aped the manners—and insolence—of the young sparks to whom they gave the reins, in consideration of a handsome tip.

The appearance of the old Stage coachman has been depicted in unfading colours in the portrait of Mr. Tony Weller. “ It is very possible that at some earlier period of his career, Mr. Weller’s profile might have presented a bold and determined outline. His face, however, had expanded under the influence of good living, and a disposition remarkable for resignation ; and its bold fleshy curves had so far extended beyond the limits originally assigned them, that unless you took a full view of his countenance in front, it was difficult to distinguish more than the extreme tip of a very

rubicund nose. His chin, from the same cause, had acquired the grave and imposing form which is generally described by prefixing the word 'double' to that expressive feature; and his complexion exhibited that peculiarly mottled combination of colours which is only to be seen in gentlemen of his profession, and in underdone roast beef. Round his neck he wore a crimson travelling shawl, which merged into his chin by such imperceptible gradations, that it was difficult to distinguish the folds of the one from the folds of the other. Over this, he mounted a long waistcoat of a broad pink-striped pattern, and over that again, a wide-skirted green coat, ornamented with large brass buttons, whereof the two which garnished the waist, were so far apart, that no man had ever beheld them both, at the same time. His hair, which was short, sleek, and black, was just visible beneath the capacious brim of a low-crowned brown hat. His legs were encased in knee-cord breeches, and painted top-boots: and a copper watch-chain, terminating in one seal, and a key of the same material, dangled loosely from his capacious waistband."

In addition to the bars of the inns from which their coaches started, coachmen had several houses of call in London, one of which was the Prince's Head, Buckingham Street, where the drivers and guards of Golden Cross coaches were wont to forgather and exchange news of the road. Another such place was the unidentified tavern off Cheapside or Newgate Street, where Mr. Pickwick first met Mr. Weller Senior. According to Sam's directions it was the

" 'Second court on the right hand side—last house but vun on the same side the vay—take the box as stands in the first fire-place, 'cos there an't no leg in the middle o' the table, wich all the others has, and it's very inconvenient.' The room was one of a very homely description, and was apparently under the especial patronage of stage coachmen: for several gentlemen, who had all the appearance of belonging to that learned profession, were drinking and smoking in the different boxes."

The whole responsibility of the coach rested with the guard who, in Mail coaches, had the added care of the letter bags. In their red coats, with the gleaming brass horn at their lips, they cut fine figures as they swept through an

admiring village or wayside town. They were not only responsible for collecting the fares of those who joined the coach on the road, but had to see that the proper times were kept, were entrusted with the execution of innumerable commissions and, in cases of accident, had to look after the mails and the passengers, carrying on the former by horse and arranging for a fresh coach for the latter if necessary.

Those old guards were men of strength of endurance, many of them accustomed to journeys of 120 or 150 miles at a stretch and sometimes to much longer. They only received 10s. a week wages, out of which they had to pay half for oil, help and other matters, but inside passengers were each supposed to give the guard 2s. 6d. and outsiders 2s., while he was allowed to collect extras for luggage and the execution of small commissions.

“When the guard had blown himself quite out of breath he put the horn into a little tunnel of a basket fastened to the coachside for the purpose, and giving himself a plentiful shower of blows on the chest and shoulders, observed it was uncommon cold; after which he demanded of every person separately whether he was going right through, and if not, where he *was* going. . . . He then took a small brown-paper parcel out of his hat, and putting on a pair of horn spectacles (the writing been crabbed), he read the direction half a dozen times over; having done which he consigned the parcel to its old place, put up his spectacles again and stared at everybody in turn. After this he took another blow at the horn by way of refreshment; and having exhausted his usual topics of conversation, folded his arms as well as he could in so many coats, and falling into a solemn silence, looked carelessly at the familiar objects which met his eyes on every side as the coach rolled on—the only things he seemed to care for being horses and droves of cattle, which he scrutinised with a critical air as they were passed upon the road.”—(*Nickleby*, 5.)

Short halts were made at suitable times for meals at one or other of the inns where the horses were changed, where would often be served “a dinner which would have been cheap at half a crown a mouth, if any moderate number of mouths could have eaten it in the time.” It was, indeed, a favourite trick of less reputable innkeepers to have the table enticingly laid but to delay serving the actual food until

just before the coach was about to start when, having snatched but a hurried mouthful, the traveller was obliged to leave the tempting repast—for which he had paid in advance.

Travelling post-chaise was decidedly the pleasantest and most expeditious way of getting from one place to another. The chaise was a light and comfortable vehicle with two, or more commonly four wheels, drawn by two or four horses ridden by postboys. For great haste, such as in the famous Wardle-Jingle chaise, four horses, with two postillions were used, but when Mr. Pickwick and Sam went down to the West Country to smooth matters after Mr. Winkle's marriage, they travelled with only a pair. As with a coach, the horses were changed from stage to stage and considerable speed was possible. There was room for only two persons in a post-chaise, but most vehicles were built with a dickey behind.

A more luxurious method of travel was by private chariot, such as Montague and Jonas Chuzzlewit took when they travelled down to ensnare Pecksniff. Starting out with four horses for the first stage, they continued the journey with two, and, leaving London shortly after nine o'clock one summer evening, reached Salisbury about dawn.

All degrees of humanity, all kinds of horse-flesh were to be seen on the hard metal roads which Macadam had recently introduced; barefooted tramps and My Lord travelling post, alike followed the dusty highway over the commons and across the village greens. All these roads were turnpike roads, kept in repair by tolls levied at the gates encountered at intervals along their length.

The principal turnpike gates out of London were at Knightsbridge (corner of Gloucester Road), Kensington (corner of Earls Court Road), Marble Arch, Notting Hill (hence Notting Hill Gate), King's Cross, City Road (near Old Street), Shoreditch, Commercial Road, three in the Old Kent Road, Obelisk (at the Surrey Theatre) and at Kennington Church (still called Kennington Gate). These turnpike gates, according to Mr. Weller, were kept by men "as has met with some disappointment in life, consequence of vich they retires from the world and shuts themselves up in pikes, partly with the view of being solitary, and partly to rewenge themselves on mankind by takin' tolls. If they

was gen'l'm'n you'd call 'em misanthropes, but as it is, they only takes to pike-keepin'." The tolls which in some cases were doubled on Sundays, varied with the size of the vehicle. Foot passengers paid nothing and passed through side gates.

The frequency of markets in all parts of the country kept the roads fairly full with small local traffic in addition to the coaches and post-chaises which rattled and thundered along the highroads throughout the livelong day. Races and fairs, then far more common than now, kept an entire population almost constantly upon the move. "From passing numerous groups of gipsies and trampers on the road, wending their way towards the town where the races were to be held, and straggling out from every by-way and cross-country lane they gradually fell into a stream of people, some walking by the side of covered carts, others with horses, others with donkeys, others toiling on with heavy loads upon their backs, but all tending to the same point. The public-houses by the way-side sent out boisterous shouts and clouds of smoke, and from the misty windows clusters of broad red faces looked down upon the road. On every piece of waste or common ground, some small gambler drove his noisy trade, and bellowed to the idle passers-by to stop and try their chance; the crowd grew thicker and more noisy; gilt gingerbread in blanket-stalls exposed its glories in the dust and often a four-horse carriage, dashing by, obscured all objects in the gritty cloud it raised and left them, stunned and blinded, far behind."—(*Curiosity Shop*, 19.)

The great feature of the roads in coaching days, were the inns which were to be found at every stage. To begin with there was the London inn from which the coach started. There were many of these scattered about the City, some of them even yet retain their traditional connection as receiving houses for parcels or booking-offices for the railway companies.

One of the most important London coaching inns was the Golden Cross, Charing Cross, which, in the days of Mr. Pickwick and of David Copperfield, stood close to the site now occupied by the Nelson Column, whence it was moved to its present position facing Craven Street in 1830. Coaches started from the Golden Cross for Gloucester, Cheltenham

and South Wales ; Chester and Liverpool ; Hastings and Dover ; Stroud ; Brighton ; Halifax and many other places.

David Copperfield's experience of the Golden Cross was not happy : " We went to the Golden Cross, at Charing Cross, then a mouldy sort of establishment in a close neighbourhood. A waiter showed me into the coffee-room ; and a chambermaid introduced me to my small bedchamber, which smelt like a hackney-coach, and was shut up like a family vault. . . . The waiter began to lay the cloth for my dinner in a box by the fire. While he was so engaged, he asked me what I would take with it ; and on my replying ' Half a pint of sherry,' thought it a favourable opportunity, I am afraid, to extract that measure of wine from the stale leavings at the bottom of several small decanters. I am of this opinion, because, while I was reading the newspaper, I observed him behind a low wooden partition, which was his private apartment, very busy pouring out a number of those vessels into one, like a chemist and druggist making up a prescription. When the wine came, I thought it flat ; and it certainly had more English crumbs in it than were to be expected in a foreign wine in anything like a pure state ; but I was bashful enough to drink it, and say nothing."

Thanks to Steerforth's influence David's quarters were changed to a better room—Number 72—where he slept in a blissful condition " until the early morning coaches, rumbling out of the archway underneath, made me dream of thunder and the gods."

It was while emerging from this same archway in the Rochester "Commodore" that Jingle told the Pickwickians such a gruesome tale : " Terrible place—dangerous work—other day—five children—mother—tall lady eating sandwiches—forgot the arch—crash—knock—children look round—mother's head off—sandwich in her hand—no mouth to put it in—head of a family off—shocking—shocking ! " According to Mr. Leopold Wagner, when the old inn was demolished this archway was incorporated in the new building where it can still be seen as the back entrance to the hotel in Duncannon Street.

Coaches for many parts of England and Scotland started from the Saracen's Head, which stood at the top of Snow Hill, next to St. Sepulchre's Church. During the eighty years

preceding its demolition in 1868 the inn had been kept by succeeding members of the Mountain family, the most prominent of whom was Sarah Ann Mountain who carried on the business after her husband's death in 1816. She was quite a character in the coaching world, and not only despatched thirty coaches from her inn every day, but created a record with her "Tally Ho" to Birmingham which did the journey in 11 hours, being an average of 10 miles an hour the whole way. She also built coaches for sale at 110 to 120 guineas apiece which was not dear for the splendid vehicles she produced.

"The inn frowns at you from the top of the yard, while from the door of the hind boot of all the red coaches that are standing therein there glares a small Saracen's head. . . . When you walk up this yard you will see the booking office on your left and the tower of St. Sepulchre's Church, darting abruptly up into the sky, on your right and a gallery of bedrooms on both sides. Just before you, you will observe a long window with the words 'Coffee Room' legibly painted above it."—(*Nickleby*.)

The Belle Sauvage, Ludgate Hill, where Mr. Tony Weller made his London headquarters, was the starting place for coaches for the Eastern Counties; the Cross Keys, in Wood Street—a few steps up on the left from Cheapside—was the terminus of coaches to Rochester and many shorter stages; from the Swan with Two Necks in Lad Lane (now Gresham Street) coaches set out to all parts of the kingdom; the Bull and Mouth, St. Martin's le Grand, was the terminus for North Country coaches and it was there that John Browdie and his honeymoon party alighted. The White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly, was the starting place for West Country coaches. This house was originally at the corner of Arlington Street, on the site now occupied by the Ritz Hotel, but it was later moved across the road and in 1884 the old name was dropped and became Hatchett's. "The travellers' room at the White Horse Cellar is of course uncomfortable; it would be no travellers' room if it were not. It is the right-hand parlour, into which an aspiring kitchen fire-place appears to have walked, accompanied by a rebellious poker, tongs and shovel. It is divided into boxes, for the solitary confinement of travellers, and is furnished with a clock, a looking-glass,

and a live waiter : which latter article is kept in a small kennel for washing glasses, in a corner of the apartment.”—(*Pickwick*, 35.)

It would be impossible to leave the old London inns without some mention of the White Hart, in the Borough, which, like all its companions save the George Inn, has vanished completely. “The yard presented none of that bustle and activity which are the usual characteristics of a large coach inn. Three or four lumbering wagons, each with a pile of goods beneath its ample canopy, about the height of the second-floor window of an ordinary house, were stowed away beneath a lofty roof which extended over one end of the yard : and another, which was probably to commence its journey that morning, was drawn out into the open space. A double tier of bedroom galleries, with old clumsy balustrades, ran round two sides of the straggling area, and a double row of bells to correspond, sheltered from the weather by a little sloping roof, hung over the door leading to the bar and coffee-room. Two or three gigs and chaise-carts were wheeled up under different little sheds and pent-houses ; and the occasional heavy tread of a cart-horse, or rattling of a chain at the further end of the yard, announced to anybody who cared about the matter, that the stable lay in that direction. When we add that a few boys in smock frocks were lying asleep on heavy packages, woolpacks, and other articles that were scattered about on heaps of straw, we have described as fully as need be the general appearance of the yard of the White Hart Inn, High Street, Borough.”—(*Pickwick*, 10.)

But it was the country inns on the English highroads that made the glory of the old coaching days. After a long journey in driving rain or a piercing winter wind, what better than to see the inn lights ahead, to clamber stiffly down from the coach roof and find a fat and cheery host extending a welcome at the open door ?

“ ‘ Lights in the Sun, John ; make up the fire ; the gentlemen are wet ! ’ cried the landlord. ‘ This way, gentlemen ; don’t trouble yourselves about the postboy now, sir. I’ll send him to you when you ring for him, sir. Now, John, the candles.’ ”

“ The candles were brought, the fire was stirred up, and a fresh log of wood thrown on. In ten minutes’ time, a waiter

was laying the cloth for dinner, the curtains were drawn, the fire was blazing brightly, and everything looked (as everything always does, in all decent English inns) as if the travellers had been expected, and their comforts prepared, for days beforehand.”—(*Pickwick*, 51.)

Such was the Saracen’s Head (now the Pomfret Arms), Towcester. The larger inns were no whit less comfortable and full of hospitality. The Bull at Rochester, for example, was typical of what was to be found in most towns. It stands to this day, proud of its Pickwickian associates and little changed since it was thus described by Boz :

“The Winglebury Arms, in the centre of the High Street, is the principal inn of Great Winglebury—the commercial inn, posting-house and excise office ; the ‘Blue’ house at every election, and the Judge’s house at every assizes. The house is a large one, with a red brick and stone front ; a pretty, spacious hall, ornamented with evergreen plants, terminates in a perspective view of the bar, and a glass case in which are displayed a choice variety of delicacies ready for dressing, to catch the eye of a new-comer the moment he enters and excite his appetite to the highest possible pitch. Opposite doors lead to the ‘coffee’ and ‘commercial’ rooms ; and a great wide, rambling staircase—three stairs and a landing—four stairs and another landing—one step and another landing—half a dozen stairs and another landing—and so on—conducts to galleries of bedrooms and labyrinths of sitting-rooms, denominated ‘private’ where you may enjoy yourself as privately as you can in any place where some bewildered being walks into your room every five minutes by mistake, and then walks out again, to open all the doors along the gallery to find his own.”

Somewhat similar was the Salisbury inn where Tom Pinch and Martin were entertained by John Westlock : “A famous Inn ! The hall a very grove of dead game, and dangling joints of mutton ; and in one corner an illustrious larder, with glass doors, developing cold fowls and noble joints, and tarts wherein the raspberry jam coyly withdrew itself, as such a precious creature should, behind a lattice-work of pastry. And behold, on the first floor, at the court end of the house, in a room with all the window curtains drawn, a fire piled half-way up the chimney, plates warming before it,

wax candles gleaming everywhere, and a table spread for three, with silver and glass enough for thirty.”—(*Chuzzlewit*, 12.)

There were, of course, exceptions to these fine houses, as instanced by the Great White Horse at Ipswich. “Never were such labyrinths of uncarpeted passages, such clusters of mouldy, ill-lighted rooms, such huge numbers of small dens for eating and sleeping in, beneath any one roof, as are collected together between the four walls of the Great White Horse at Ipswich.” Visitors were received by a “corpulent man, with a fortnight’s napkin under his arm, and coeval stockings on his legs who condescended to order boots to bring in the gentleman’s luggage, and preceding them down a long dark passage, ushered them into a large, badly-furnished apartment, with a dirty grate, in which a small fire was making a wretched attempt to be cheerful, but was fast sinking beneath the dispiriting influence of the place. After the lapse of an hour, a bit of fish and a steak were served up to the travellers, and when the dinner was cleared away, Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Peter Magnus drew their chairs up to the fire and having ordered a bottle of the worst possible port wine, at the highest possible price for the good of the house, drank brandy and water for their own.”

On by-roads and in the smaller villages, the accommodation was humbler but none the less inviting. When Mr. Pickwick and his friends reached the Leathern Bottle at Cobham, “A stout country lad opened the door at the end of the passage, and the three friends entered a long, low-roofed room, furnished with a large number of high-backed leather-cushioned chairs of fantastic shapes, and embellished with a great variety of old portraits and roughly-coloured prints of some antiquity. At the upper end of the room there was a table, with a white cloth upon it, well covered with a roast fowl, bacon, ale, and et ceteras; and at the table sat Mr. Tupman, looking as unlike a man who had taken his leave of the world, as possible.”

It is little wonder that Mr. Pickwick observed “really, for a misanthrope’s choice, this is one of the prettiest and most desirable places of residence I ever met with.”

Even more cosy, perhaps, could be little village ale-houses, with “neat wines, good beds, and first-rate entertainment for man or beasts.”



Jenny Lind



Jenny Lind and Lablache in Verdi's "I Masnadieri"

THE JENNY LIND SEASON AT HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE, 1847

“The kitchen fire burnt clear and red, the table was spread out, the kettle boiled; the slippers were there, the bootjack, too; sheets of ham were there, cooking on the gridiron; half a dozen eggs were there, poaching in the frying pan; a plethoric cherry-brandy bottle was there, winking at a foaming jug of beer upon the table; rare provisions were there, dangling from the rafters as if you had only to open your mouth, and something exquisitely ripe and good would be but too glad of the excuse for tumbling into it.”—(*Chuzzlewit*, 43.)

I will take leave of this rather attractive subject with the interior of the Jolly Sandboys, “a small roadside inn of pretty ancient date, with a sign, representing three Sandboys increasing their jollity with as many jugs of ale and bags of gold, creaking and swinging on its post on the opposite side of the road. A mighty fire was blazing on the hearth and roaring up the wide chimney with a cheerful sound, which a large iron cauldron, bubbling and simmering in the heat, lent its pleasant aid to swell. There was a deep red ruddy blush upon the room, and when the landlord stirred the fire, sending the flames skipping leaping up—when he took off the lid of the iron pot and there rushed out a savoury smell, while the bubbling sound grew deeper and more rich, and an unctuous steam came floating out, hanging in a delicious mist above their heads—when he did this, Mr. Codlin’s heart was touched. He sat down in the chimney-corner and smiled.

“Mr. Codlin sat smiling in the chimney-corner, eyeing the landlord as with a roguish look he held the cover in his hand, and, feigning that his doing so was needful to the welfare of the cookery, suffered the delightful steam to tickle the nostrils of his guest. The glow of the fire was upon the landlord’s bald head, and upon his twinkling eye, and upon his watering mouth, and upon his pimpled face, and upon his round fat figure. Mr. Codlin drew his sleeve across his lips, and said in a murmuring voice, ‘What is it?’

“‘It’s a stew of tripe,’ said the landlord smacking his lips, ‘and cow-heel,’ smacking them again, ‘and bacon,’ smacking them once more, ‘and steak,’ smacking them for the fourth time, ‘and peas, cauliflowers, new potatoes, and sparrow-grass, all working up together in one delicious gravy.’ Having come to the climax, he smacked his lips a great many times, and taking a long hearty sniff of the fragrance that

was hovering about, put on the cover again with the air of one whose toils on earth were over.

“ ‘At what time will it be ready?’ asked Mr. Codlin faintly.

“ ‘It’ll be done to a turn,’ said the landlord looking up to the clock—and the very clock had a colour in its fat white face, and looked a clock for Jolly Sandboys to consult—‘ it’ll be done to a turn at twenty-two minutes before eleven.’

“ ‘Then,’ said Mr. Codlin, ‘ fetch me a pint of warm ale, and don’t let nobody bring into the room even so much as a biscuit till the time arrives.’ ”—(*Curiosity Shop*, 18.)

CHAPTER VI

A CHAPTER OF HORRORS

Blackier side of London—Drainage—The Water Supply—Overcrowding and the Rookeries—St. Giles—A Gin Palace—A Thieves' Den—Disgraceful Burials—State of the Thames—Cholera—Chimney-Sweeps—Factory Children—In the Mines—Women in the Pits—London Seamstresses—Fate of Lunatics.

THE squeamish would do well to avoid this chapter, but no just idea can be obtained of life in the days of Dickens without some account of the blackier side of London, with its inadequate water supply ; its almost total lack of drainage ; its stinking river and festering slums ; its thousands of human slaves — sweated seamstresses and miserable sweeps. In this chapter I have drawn the picture in very soft colours. Imagination and language are alike inadequate to describe what actually existed. The reports of Parliamentary Commissions between 1830 and 1850 depict the period in vivid colours which even the Committee acknowledge to be but a faint approximation to the truth. To them the curious must turn for fuller and more lurid details.

In the summer of 1832 an epidemic of cholera swept across London and out of a population of 1,500,000 there were 10,000 cases and half as many deaths ; six years later, it was ascertained that twenty of the Metropolitan unions of parishes contained 77,000 paupers of whom in that one year, 14,000 or one-fifth were attacked by fever and 1300 of them died. These two instances, taken at random, show that something was very wrong with the conditions of the poor.

A witness before one of the Parliamentary Commissions observed that " the poorer classes in the neglected localities are exposed to causes of disease and death which are peculiar to them ; the operation of these peculiar causes is steady, unceasing, sure, and the result is the same as if twenty or thirty thousand of these people were annually taken out of their wretched dwellings and put to death the actual fact

being that they are allowed to remain *in* them and die." Whitechapel, Holborn and Lambeth were notoriously the worst of the localities referred to; typhus and the fevers which proceed from the malaria of filth were always prevalent in them.

There was no legislation to deal with this state of affairs. Except in the City itself no attempt had been made at local government though there were some three hundred small bodies—Paving Boards and the like, jostling, jarring, unscientific, cumbrous and costly, who had no connection with one another and little to do with the public.

The drainage of London until 1860 was based on legislation and plans dating from the reigns of Henry VIII and William and Mary. Such sewers as there were emptied themselves into the Thames at low water, their contents being driven back, of course, with the rise of the tide. But even these sewers were inadequate in size and useless in plan, some of them, even, being so constructed that to be of any use the contents would have to flow uphill!

But the sewers were the least of the drainage evil. In 1841 there were 270,000 houses in the metropolis; most of these had one cesspool under them, but more than half stood over two, three or even four of these pits of disease. In the West End there was practically no other system of drainage. In the poor quarters, where the pools were never emptied, thousands of wretches lived in cellars "with filth from overflowing cesspools exuding through and running down the walls, and over the floor."

Years later the Earl of Shaftesbury, recounting some of his experiences to the Royal Commissioners on the Housing of the Working Classes, said: "Frying-pan Alley was a very famous alley in Holborn; it was very narrow, the only necessary accommodation being at the end; in the first house that I turned into there was a single room, the window was very small, and the light came through the door. I saw a young woman there, and I asked her if she had been there some little time. 'Yes,' she said, 'her husband went out to work, and was obliged to come there to be near his work.' She said, 'I am miserable!' 'What is it?' I asked. 'Look there,' said she, 'at that great hole; the landlord will not mend it. I have every night to sit up and watch, or my

husband sits up to watch, because that hole is over a common cesspool, and the rats come up, sometimes twenty at a time, and if we did not watch them they would eat the baby up.' "

The water supply of London was as neglected as the drainage. Beginning with the establishment of the New River Company in 1613, the supply of water had been committed to various private companies numbering, in 1851, seven—five North and two South of the river. But although mains were carried to all parts of the metropolis, the companies were under no obligation to lay pipes on to individual buildings and in 1850 it was computed that 80,000 houses, inhabited by 640,000 persons, were destitute of any water supply whatsoever. In many cases water for all purposes had to be drawn from standpipes in courts or at street corners, where it was turned on for a few hours in the day time, though not always every day and not at all on Sundays. With the exception of the water supplied by the New River Company, the fluid was merely sewage taken from the Thames where that foul river was its foulest. Filtering was unknown—or, anyhow, was not considered necessary—and the colour and stench of the only available liquid for drinking purposes were indescribable.

Where the companies failed to supply the water, it had to be obtained from pumps over shallow wells which were simply sumps for the sewers and cemeteries with which every neighbourhood abounded. South of the Thames water was drawn from tidal ditches or wells—"In Jacob's Island, in Bermondsey, may be seen at any time of the day women dipping water, with pails attached by ropes to the backs of houses, from a foul, fetid ditch, its banks coated with a compound of mud and filth, and with offal and carrion—the water to be used for every purpose, culinary ones not excepted."—(*Board of Health Report*, 1850.)

When the most obvious necessities of health were thus neglected it is little wonder that no attention was paid to overcrowding and its attendant miseries. Vague legislation, had, it is true, been introduced to prevent undue congestion, but evasion of the penalties it enjoined was simple and it applied mostly to existing buildings, in nowise preventing houses from being run up in any backyard or forecourt, where there was even a semblance of space. Thus, already

congested areas became more congested and buildings were fitted into odd shapes behind houses where they could only be approached by dark and noisome alleys and no thoroughfares. Flimsy, so jerry-built that they would have fallen in a few years had there been any space for them to fall into, destitute of air, light, water and drainage, they might have been so many bottles of disease germs opened and the contents scattered over London by every wind.

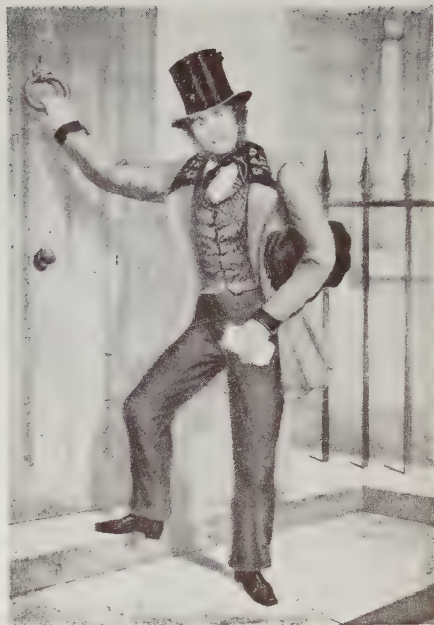
These tumble-down, rat-infested, disease-laden houses were let and sublet to such an extent that even walls and corners in every room were occupied by whole families. One small, damp, ill-ventilated and filthy apartment—attic or cellar—would perhaps accommodate three families, serving as their workshop, kitchen, eating-room and sleeping-room. In one corner some unhappy infant might be seeing the dreary day for the first time ; in another, a man would be raving in the delirium of fever ; a third corner would, like as not, contain the most fortunate of any—a corpse.

One of the worst of the London Rookeries—as these slum areas were called—was the Rookery of St. Giles. Before New Oxford Street was made, in the mid '40s, the main thoroughfare westward ran along High Holborn, Broad Street, past St. Giles's Church, up High Street to the junction of Tottenham Court Road and Oxford Street. All the area North of this bend was a dreadful slum centred round Meux's brewery, the ruins of which still (1925) remain.

"The filthy and miserable appearance of this part of London can hardly be imagined by those who have not witnessed it. Wretched houses with broken windows patched with rags and paper ; every room let out to a different family, and in many instances to two or even three—fruit and 'sweet-stuff' manufacturers in the cellars, barbers and red-herring vendors in the front parlours, cobblers in the back, a bird fancier in the first floor, three families on the second ; starvation in the attics, Irishmen in the passage, a 'musician' in the front kitchen, and a charwoman and five hungry children in the back one—filth everywhere—a gutter before the houses and a drain behind—clothes drying and slops emptying, from the windows ; girls of fourteen or fifteen with matted hair, walking about barefoot, and in white greatcoats, almost their only covering ; boys of all ages in coats of all



"'Heads,'" as the pleman says. A coster
lad tossing for hot pies



"'Ev'ry morn, as true as the clock,
Somebody hears the Postman's knock"



The Monster Organ creates a sensation in Belgravia
BYGONE LONDON STREET SCENES

sizes and no coats at all ; men and women, in every variety of scanty and dirty apparel, lounging, scolding, drinking, smoking, squabbling, fighting and swearing." So writes Boz.

It is described in more detail by Thomas Miller in his *Picturesque London* : " We will enter these streets and peep into those dark, close, unhealthy, and forbidding-looking rooms. In this narrow alley a dusky twilight reigns throughout the sunny noon of day : we have to feel for the noisome staircases which open on either hand. What a dead smell floats around us ; a close noisome air, such as arises from an overcrowded vault, even more death-smelling than many a vault we have in our day visited. The staircase is encrusted with dirt ; a kind of black greasy mud, which has been trampled into toughness, old filth, the accumulation, it may be, of years, for, by the side of the staircase, where it is least trodden, it is mildewed and mouldy.

" It must have been many years since these apartments were either painted or whitewashed ; a black grey hue pervades everything, as if the very atmosphere had itself grown dark through hovering here so long and motionless, as if it were compelled to stand and sicken between the stench from below and the black vapours above—the one arising from the fœtid cellars, the other hurled down by the rain from the soot-covered roofs—exhalations of the earth earthy, of the sewer sewery, of the filth filthy—poison ever propagating poison—gutters ever generating deadly gases, and creeping into the blood of the inhabitants : and yet strange, in spite of its filth, this neighbourhood has been passed over lightly by the ' fell destroyer ' (cholera), compared to others which he has ravaged and is still ravaging.

" Behold ! the curtain is at last uplifted, and those are living and breathing forms that sit or stand before us. That poor girl is tying up her water-cresses in bunches, ready for to-morrow's sale ; she has no other place but the floor to lay them on before she puts them into her little basket ready bunched. The green bunches at her feet will be sold, and eaten on the morrow by those who never bestow a thought on the filthy floor on which they now lie. In that room they will be kept all night, amid the breathing of above a dozen sleepers. Those cabbages which the man is piling up in the corner are the unsold remainder of to-day's stock ; he will

strip off the outer leaves in the morning, to give them a fresh look : they will also be eaten on the morrow, in spite of the poisonous exhalations they are steeped in. He will sleep beside them all night : the man with the three dogs will share his bed, and perhaps the dogs themselves may find a couch amongst the cabbages. The woman who has just brought in that bundle of filthy rags is also a lodger, and will no doubt make a pillow of her dirty burthen. That pile of shavings, sacking, straw, and rags will be dragged out of the corner when they feel disposed to sleep, and one will lie down here and another there, and for a few hours bury their miseries in forgetfulness.

“Let us lift up the flap of this cellar, and see what is going on below ; for that gleam of fire, or candlelight, shows that these underground regions are inhabited—that the habits of the ancient Britons are not wholly abandoned, but that the descendants of those old burrowers of hill and rock have not changed the twilight of their dry caverns for the damp and darkness of these sewer-like habitations.”

Small wonder that from such surroundings the wretched inhabitants, if they had a copper or two to spend, would seek to forget their miseries in gin, which a kindly government made cheaper than tea ! A typical Gin-Palace close to the Rookery is thus described by Boz : “You turn the corner. What a change ! All is light and brilliancy. The hum of many voices issues from the splendid gin-shop which forms the commencement of the two streets opposite ; and the gay building with the fantastically ornamented parapet, the illuminated clock, the plate-glass windows surrounded by stucco rosettes, and its profusion of gas lights in richly-gilt burners, is perfectly dazzling when contrasted with the darkness and dirt we have just left. The interior is even gayer than the exterior. A bar of French-polished mahogany, elegantly carved, extends the whole width of the place ; and there are two side-aisles of great casks, painted green and gold, enclosed with a light brass rail, and bearing such inscriptions as ‘Old Tom, 549’ ; ‘Young Tom, 360’ ; ‘Samson, 1421’—the figures agreeing, we presume, with gallons, understood. Beyond the bar is a lofty and spacious saloon, full of the same enticing vessels, with a gallery running round it, equally well furnished. On the counter, in addition

to the usual spirit apparatus, are two or three little baskets of cakes and biscuits, which are carefully secured at the top with wickerwork, to prevent their contents being unlawfully abstracted. Behind it are two showily-dressed damsels with large necklaces, dispensing the spirits and 'compounds'. They are assisted by the ostensible proprietor of the concern, a stout coarse fellow in a fur cap, put on very much on one side to give him a knowing air, and to display his sandy whiskers to the best advantage."

Farther citywards, along Holborn, was another nest of horrors, in which crime was added to filth :

"Near to the spot on which Snow Hill and Holborn Hill meet, there opens, upon the right hand as you come out of the City, a narrow and dismal alley leading to Saffron Hill. In its filthy shops are exposed for sale huge bunches of second-hand silk handkerchiefs, of all sizes and patterns ; for here reside the traders who purchase them from pickpockets. Hundreds of these handkerchiefs hang dangling from pegs outside the windows or flaunting from the door-posts ; and the shelves, within, are piled with them. Confined as the limits of Field Lane are, it has its barber, its coffee-shop, its beer-shop, and its fried-fish warehouse. It is a commercial colony of itself : the emporium of petty larceny : visited at early morning, and setting-in of dusk, by silent merchants, who traffic in dark back-parlours, and who go as strangely as they come. Here, the clothesman, the shoe-vamper, and the rag-merchant, display their goods, as sign-boards to the petty thief ; here, stores of old iron and bones, and heaps of mildewy fragments of woollen-stuff and linen, rust and rot in the grimy cellars."—(*Oliver Twist*.)

When Farringdon Street was continued from the foot of Holborn Hill towards Clerkenwell, in 1844, most of this criminal slum was destroyed and what remained was demolished in the making of Holborn Viaduct. Some curious thieves' dens were brought to light, amongst them an old house reputed to be over three hundred years old.

It had all the conveniences of a hiding-place, with concealed means of escape—in dark closets, sliding panels, and secret recesses, and by as many trap doors as in the stage of a theatre. By passing down one of these traps, the pursued criminal could elude the vigilance of the police, by getting

through a window and crossing the Fleet Ditch over a plank which was kept at hand, and afterwards drawn into the opposite house. He might then pass into Black Boy Alley, and thereby get into Cow-cross, and the knot of courts and alleys in that neighbourhood. Immediately under the basement was a capacious dark cellar, and a den, or cell, wherein were found a human skull and some bones, and the top of a butcher's steel, bearing on it "Benjamin Turtell, July 19, 1787," in silver letters and figures. This cell was about four feet wide, and nine in depth, excavated in the rough earth. It was here that a chimney-sweep, named Jones, who escaped out of Newgate about three years before, was so securely hidden, that, although the house was repeatedly searched by the police, he was never discovered, till it was divulged by one of its inmates, who, incautiously observing that he knew whereabouts Jones was concealed, was taken up, and remanded from time to time as an accessory to his escape; until at last tired of prison fare and prison discipline, pointed out the place to obtain his own liberty. Jones had his food conveyed to him through a small aperture, by a brick or two being left out next the rafters. The ground-floor was long occupied as a chandler's shop, by way of lulling suspicion. Immediately behind the counter were trap-doors, one of which was used as a means of escape, and the other opened into a secret depository for stolen articles. Upon the first floor, too, were several hiding-places; and among the contrivances was a spout, the entire extent of the house, through which stolen property could be removed with the greatest dispatch. The means of escape through the roofs, and their communication with the roofs of the adjoining houses, were very intricate.

In such a place one can well picture Oliver Twist's first impression of Fagin and his crew: "The walls and ceiling of the room were perfectly black with age and dirt. There was a deal table before the fire: upon which were a candle, stuck in a ginger-beer bottle, two or three pewter pots, a loaf and butter, and a plate. In a frying-pan, which was on the fire, and which was secured to the mantelshelf by a string, some sausages were cooking; and standing over them, with a toasting-fork in his hand, was a very old shrivelled Jew, whose villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by

a quantity of matted red hair. He was dressed in a greasy flannel gown, with his throat bare ; and seemed to be divining his attention between the frying-pan and a clothes-horse, over which a great number of silk handkerchiefs were hanging. Several rough beds made of old sacks, were huddled side by side on the floor. Seated round the table were four or five boys, none older than the Dodger, smoking long clay pipes, and drinking spirits with the air of middle-aged men."

Unhappily the overcrowding in London was not confined to the living. Indeed, it was almost more difficult to find room for the dead than for the living. As the parishes grew in population the small burial grounds attached to the churches were quite inadequate to contain the dead. The entire available space did not exceed 203 acres and each burial ground was closely hemmed in by dwelling-houses. In this area of 203 acres there were buried every year 50,000 corpses, with the result that the ground was not only saturated with decaying human remains, but that new graves had to be dug, perforce, literally in human debris before there had been time, even, for the bodies to decompose. Writing on August 30, 1849, the Inspector of the Fleet Street Police Station narrated a gruesome incident which he witnessed at St. Ann's Churchyard, Blackfriars: "Upon the retirement of some persons who had just witnessed the interment of a friend, the gravedigger dragged from behind a tombstone part of a mutilated body (from the hips downward) to the grave, which had a few minutes previously received its tenant, and thrust it in with great violence, with a covering; he then descended into the grave, which was about twelve feet deep, and dismembered the limbs with a spade, and placed them beside the coffin, over which he sprinkled a small quantity of earth. This grave has been left open for upwards of three weeks for the reception of bodies, having only a slight covering of earth and boards. There are workshops in the immediate vicinity of this burial-ground, in which upwards of 100 persons are employed, who suffer from the effluvium arising from this abominable receptacle for decaying mortality."

One of the worst of these Metropolitan cemeteries was that of St. Martin in the Fields, situated in Drury Lane. Another in the same street (now covered by York Street) was the churchyard of St. Mary le Strand, familiar to readers of

Bleak House as the scene of "Nemo's" burial: "A hemmed-in churchyard, pestiferous and obscene, whence malignant diseases are communicated to the bodies of our dear brothers and sisters who have not departed; while our dear brothers and sisters who hang about official backstairs—would to Heaven they *had* departed!—are very complacent and agreeable. Into a beastly scrap of ground which a Turk would reject as a savage abomination, and a Caffre would shudder at, they bring our dear brother here departed to receive Christian burial.

"With houses looking on, on every side, save where a reeking little tunnel of a court gives access to the iron gate—with every villainy of life in action close on death, and every poisonous element of death in action close on life—here, they lower our dear brother down a foot or two: here, sow him in corruption, to be raised in corruption: an avenging ghost at many a sick bedside: a shameful testimony to future ages, how civilisation and barbarism walked this boastful island together.

"Come night, come darkness, for you cannot come too soon, or stay too long, by such a place as this! Come, straggling lights into the windows of the ugly houses; and you who do iniquity therein, do it at least with this dread scene shut out! Come, flame of gas, burning so sullenly above the iron gate, on which the poisoned air deposits its witch-ointment slimy to the touch! It is well that you should call to every passer-by, 'Look here!'"

And when Lady Dedlock came to see the resting-place of the man whom she had loved so well:

"'He was put there,' says Jo, holding to the bars and looking in.

"'Where? O, what a scene of horror!'

"'There!' says Jo, pointing. 'Over yinder. Among them piles of bones, and close to that there kitchin winder! They put him wery nigh the top. They was obliged to stamp upon it to git it in. I could unkiver it for you, with my broom, if the gate was open. That's why they locks it, I s'pose,' giving it a shake. 'It's always locked. Look at the rat!' cries Jo, excited. 'Hi! Look! There he goes! Ho! Into the ground!'"

Most of these pestiferous burial grounds were closed by

Order in Council between 1853 and 1858, and many of them are now playgrounds for children or sequestered spots where City workers can eat their lunch in seclusion and peace. By an Act of 1884 the erection of buildings on these old sites was prohibited.

Another public pest, characteristic of London, until the completion of the sewage scheme in 1865 and the almost simultaneous construction of the Thames Embankment, was the disgusting state of the River. Mention has already been made of the fact that the whole sewage of London was poured into the Thames. This unspeakably foul water was carried down until the turn of the tide, when all its vileness was washed back again. "Never, perhaps in the annals of mankind," wrote a Medical officer of Health in July 1858, "has such a thing been known before, as that the whole stream of a large river for a distance of seven miles should be in a state of putrid fermentation. The cause is the hot weather acting upon the ninety millions of gallons of sewage which discharge themselves daily into the Thames. And by sewage must be understood not merely house and land drainage, but also drainage from bone-boilers, soap-boilers, chemical works, breweries and gas factories—the last the most filthy of all. It is quite impossible to calculate the consequences of such a moving mass of decomposition as the river at present offers to our senses."

Even as high as Westminster the vicinity of the water was almost unbearable. On June 11th, 1858, in the House of Commons, "Mr. Brady wished to ask whether the noble lord had taken any means to mitigate the effluvium from the Thames. Hon. members sitting in the committee-rooms and library were scarcely able to bear it." On June 18th, "Mr. Mangles said, that when he was a young man Thames salmon were celebrated. The salmon, wiser than members of Parliament, had avoided the pollution, and he was informed that cartloads of fish were taken out of the Thames which had died in consequence of the state of the river. A noble mansion was prepared for the right hon. gentleman who occupied the chair, but could any hon. gentleman expect the Speaker to live in an atmosphere into which they would not put their worst enemy? They had built on the banks of the Thames a magnificent palace for the legislature, but how could they

direct the attention of any foreigner to it when he would be welcomed by a stench which was overpowering ? ”

A correspondent of *The Times* wrote in the same year : “ I am one of those unfortunate lawyers who ‘ hug the festering shore,’ and festering it is indeed with a vengeance. The stench in the Temple to-day is sickening and nauseous in the extreme ; we are enveloped in the foul miasma which spreads on either side of this repository of the filth of nigh three millions of human beings, and day and night every breath of air which we draw for the sustenance of life is tainted with its poisonous exhalations.”

According to *Punch* :

“ You may strain—you may filter the Thames as you will—
And brighten the slush of that great open sink ;
But the salts of ammonia will hang in it still,
And you’ll get, after all, a detestable drink.”

It is hardly surprising that from time to time London was swept with epidemics which carried thousands to their graves. The cholera outbreak of 1832 has been already mentioned ; in 1848 the dread scourge, which first appeared in Eastern Europe, again marched Westward reaching London on the 22nd of September. With the setting in of the cold weather it disappeared, having claimed some 470 victims, and the nation heaved a great sigh of relief. But early the next year it broke out again and as Spring and Summer wore on, attained such unprecedented violence, that, in the week ending Saturday, September the 8th, the number of deaths for the seven days amounted to 2026. On Sunday, the 16th of that month, prayers were offered in all the churches of England that the scourge should abate.

By the time the epidemic had run its course here—it was at the same time ravaging America from the Atlantic to the Pacific—the deaths in the metropolis alone amounted to 14,600 persons, and a Board of Health official attributed the whole outbreak to “ filth—filthy alleys, filthy air, filthy water, and filthy persons.”

No steps were taken to prevent a recurrence of the pest and so, three years later it reappeared, hung about during 1853 and broke out in full virulence the following year when, between July the 1st to December the 16th, it carried off

some 11,000 persons. A great number of the victims lived in houses where water was supplied by the Southwark Water Company who pumped the liquid direct from the Thames at Hungerford (Charing Cross) Bridge. In 1866 cholera appeared again and in 23 weeks slew only 5548 persons. Feeble as they had been, attempts at reform had borne fruit in the decreased number of casualties.

While the good people of England were agitating themselves violently over the horrors of slavery in remote quarters of the globe they permitted with perfect equanimity a state of slavery in their own country about which one cannot read without boiling over with anger. Pious women who attended Exeter Hall demonstrations and waxed hysterical over the sufferings of woolly-headed negroes five thousand miles away, not only permitted, but in many cases insisted upon, their chimneys being swept by little boys of five and six years old, because they kept the furniture cleaner than if brushes had been used !

The use of boys for chimney sweeping persisted, in spite of all legislation, until 1875, when the constant deaths of children in flues aroused public opinion. Yet the horrors of the trade were so dreadful that as early as the callous days of 1817 agitation to secure its abolition had been made and constantly renewed. In 1834 a half-hearted Act was passed ordering that before a boy was bound apprentice to a sweep he should be examined by two magistrates and in their presence express himself as "willing and desirous to follow the business of a Chimney-Sweep." It may well be imagined how this worked when everybody except the lad was anxious to evade the law :

" ' This is the boy, your worship,' said Mr. Bumble.

" The old gentleman who was reading the newspaper raised his head for a moment, and pulled the other old gentleman by the sleeve ; whereupon, the last-mentioned old gentleman woke up.

" ' Oh, is this the boy ? ' said the old gentleman.

" ' This is him, sir,' replied Mr. Bumble. ' Bow to the magistrate, my dear.'

" Oliver roused himself, and made his best obeisance. He had been wondering, with his eyes fixed on the magistrate's powder, whether all boards were born with that white stuff

on their heads, and were boards from thenceforth on that account.

“ ‘Well,’ said the old gentleman, ‘I suppose he’s fond of chimney sweeping?’ ”

“ ‘He doats on it, your worship,’ replied Bumble; giving Oliver a sly pinch, to intimate that he had better not say he didn’t.

“ ‘And he *will* be a sweep, will he?’ inquired the old gentleman.

“ ‘If we was to bind him to any other trade to-morrow, he’d run away simultaneous, your worship,’ replied Bumble.”

Climbing boys, or “chummies” as they were called, usually started at the age of five—sometimes four—and were employed until they were killed or grew too big to climb a chimney. In poor districts where children were many and wages small, and the number of illegitimate or “inconvenient” births was considerable, children of any age from four upwards were sold to master sweeps who were under no obligation to look after them, physically or morally.

In 1848 a case came before the Hull magistrates in which it transpired that a boy of ten had been sold five times, and though the injuries he had sustained in chimney climbing had crippled him for life, he had been driven up no less than twelve flues a couple of days before the case came on. Two years later, at Nottingham, a little boy was jammed in a chimney above a smouldering fire. He was dragged down by main force, but died a few hours later—and there was not even any inquest held.

The agonies endured by these children were terrible. The skin of little lads of four and five years old had to be toughened, for when they first climbed the chimneys they would come down with arms and knees streaming with blood, their knees looking as if the caps had been torn off. The master sweep would be waiting below, ready to rub the raw and bleeding flesh with the strongest brine he could get and immediately afterwards drive the child up another chimney.

At Walthamstow Parish Church there was a flat flue which could only be cleaned by a boy entering it head downward.

In the manufacturing districts the lot of children was no less hard. Little boys and girls of seven years worked from five in the morning to eight o’clock at night, sometimes with

a meagre half-an-hour's break at noon, all other meals having to be snatched without any interruption of work. At a Dundee spinning mill girls, some of them barely eight years of age, toiled from six in the morning until half-past eight at night and, during a six weeks "brisk time," from three in the morning until ten at night. The poor little wretches became splay-footed and crippled according to the nature of their work; it was no uncommon thing for them to have to walk up and down in the mills twenty miles a day. Yet when Lord Shaftesbury brought these facts to light he was met with cynicism and ridicule, not only by the employers, but by such men of intellect as Lord Brougham who, when even such a simple provision was suggested as lime-washing factories and preventing the escape of steam into rooms where men and children were working, remarked: "Really, my lords, I feel that this is great nonsense."

Things were even worse in the coal pits. In every mining district where they were not needed for other forms of slavery, children were commonly employed at the age of seven; in many pits little boys and girls of five and six were taken below as "trappers" to work the trapdoors on which the ventilation system of the mines depended. There, in darkness and silence, deep in the bowels of the earth, these little unfortunates passed twelve and more hours every day. In one case a child of three was found thus employed! It was not an unknown thing for the infant "trappers" to be forced by their masters—they were employed by the men and not by the mine owners, be it observed—to work thirty-six hours on end.

Very small children were used for pushing the trucks from the coal face to the bottom of the shaft. Sometimes these carts were drawn by boys and girls, harnessed like dogs and, like them, obliged to proceed on all fours. Children were also employed in pumping in the under-bottom of pits, and were often forced to stand to their knees in water twelve hours on end. In some places boys of nine and ten were in charge of the engines for raising and lowering the cages, and accidents were only to be expected. At a pit near Oldham three miners lost their lives in the cage through the lad of nine, who was running the engine, turning aside at a critical moment to watch a mouse.

And yet prosperous, self-complacent peers like Lord

Londonderry had the effrontery to say, when some of these horrors were exposed, that the children enjoyed the work and spent their time—in the pitch darkness (!)—modelling in clay and drawing on the walls.

There were few ponies in the pits as it was found that women were cheaper and did the work better. They were employed by the men and not by the owners, and proved docile enough beasts of burden when harnessed to the coal trucks, showing a stern rivalry among themselves in the matter of speed. In Scotland girls and women carried coal in baskets on their backs, up ladders and along the narrow passages from the face to the shaft. A girl of six years old was considered strong enough to carry half a hundredweight of coal.

When these things were brought to light in 1842, largely through the instrumentality of Lord Shaftesbury, the utmost opposition was met before legislation could be passed to mitigate such a dreadful state of affairs. Indeed the callousness of the educated classes of that day is inconceivable. In 1845 Shaftesbury showed that there were about 25,000 children in the calico printing industry working from sixteen to eighteen hours every day, and starting work at five or six years of age, yet men like Cobden opposed Shaftesbury's measures for reform, saying that the children worked in a mild temperature and earned fair wages—namely, three shillings a week !

“ ‘ For oh,’ say the children, ‘ we are weary,
 And we cannot run or leap ;
 If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
 To drop down in them and sleep.
 Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
 We fall upon our faces, trying to go ;
 And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
 The reddest flower would look as pale as snow ;
 For, all day, we drag our burden tiring
 Through the coal-dark, underground—
 Or, all day, we drive the wheels of iron
 In the factories, round and round.

Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper
 And your purple shows your path !
 But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
 Than the strong man in his wrath.’ ”

In London the conditions of the seamstresses was equally pitiable. To make the sumptuous dresses in which Society women sought to outshine one another the most dreadful sweated labour was employed. This is taken from an official report in 1844 : “ Miss ——, manager, ‘ has been ten years a first hand,’ which signifies the party who takes the superintendence of the business, as overlooker of the young persons, cutter-out of the work, &c. The common hours of business are from eight A.M. to eleven P.M., in the winter ; in the summer from six or half-past six, A.M., till twelve at night. During the fashionable season, that is from April to the end of July, it frequently happens that the ordinary hours are greatly exceeded ; if there is a drawing-room, or grand fête, or mourning to be made, it often happens that the work goes on for twenty hours out of the twenty-four, occasionally all night. Every season in at least half the houses of business, it happens that the young persons occasionally work twenty hours out of the twenty-four, twice or thrice a week. On special occasions, such as drawing-rooms, general mournings, and wedding orders, it is not uncommon to work all night ; has herself worked twenty hours out of the twenty-four for three months together ; at that time she was suffering from illness, and the medical attendant remonstrated against the treatment she received. He wished witness to remain in bed at least one day longer, which the employer objected to, required her to get up, and dismissed the surgeon. It frequently happened that the work was carried on till seven o’clock on Sunday morning. If any particular order was to be executed, as mournings or weddings, and they left off on Saturday night at eleven, they worked the whole of Sunday.

“ Of the general treatment and condition of these young people the sub-commissioner reports : ‘ The evidence of all parties establishes the fact that there is no class of persons in this country, living by their labour, whose happiness, health, and lives, are so unscrupulously sacrificed as those of the young dressmakers. It is a serious aggravation of all this evil, that the unkindness of the employer very frequently causes these young persons, when they become unwell, to conceal their illness from the fear of being sent out of the house ; and in this manner the disease often becomes increased

in severity, or is even rendered incurable. Some of the principals are so cruel as to object to the young women obtaining medical assistance.' ”

And all this went on well into the '60s !

Of the horrors of being attended to by nurses like Sairey Gamp and Betsy Prig we have a good idea ; yet no notion can be conceived of what the lunatic asylums were like. In 1827, the very year in which the jolly Pickwickians set out on their journeys, Shaftesbury was on a committee which inspected a pauper lunatic asylum in Bethnal Green. There were 400 patients, herded together, the more violent being treated as “crib room” cases, which meant that each was placed in a box, six feet long, and chained there by the arms and legs, a little straw being scattered over for warmth. Fifteen of these miserable creatures were all night alone in a room 26 feet long, where they were left unattended during the whole of the week-end, being hauled out on Monday morning and plunged into buckets of cold water—breaking the ice in the winter time—to wash away the filth in which they had lain. The infirmary was so bad that the Commissioners were not allowed to see it.

And it only needed an order signed by anyone who cared to call himself an apothecary to get a man or woman shut up in an asylum like that for life !

In 1859—thirty years later—Lord Shaftesbury wrote the following report of a visit to another asylum : “When we began our visitations, one of the first rooms that we went into contained nearly 150 patients, in every form of madness, a large proportion of them chained to the wall, some melancholy, some furious, but the noise and din and roar were such that we positively could not hear each other ; every form of disease and every form of madness was there. I never beheld anything so horrible and so miserable. Turning from that room we went into a court appropriated to women. In that court there were from fifteen to twenty women, whose sole dress was a piece of red cloth, tied round the waist with a rope ; many of them had long beards covered with filth ; they were crawling on their knees, and it was the only place where they could be. I do not think that I ever witnessed brute beasts in such a

condition and this had subsisted for years, and no remedy could be applied to it."

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To conclude a chapter of horrors with something grimly satisfactory, the infant mortality in the '50s amounted to nearly fifty per cent. of the total mortality, so large a proportion of little ones being spared the horror of life in a London Rookery or slavery in mine or factory.

CHAPTER VII

MAKING A NIGHT OF IT

Song and Supper Rooms—Evans's—The Concerts—The Cyder Cellars—Sam Hall—The Coal Hole—Baron Nicholson—Harmonic Meetings—Music Halls—The Canterbury—Alhambra—Haymarket—Argyll Rooms—Mott's—Caldwell's Soirées—Kate Hamilton—Faultless's Cock-pit—Gambling—Crockford's—The Raleigh—Jessop's.

THE early Victorian bachelor of a convivial turn of mind had wide scope for amusing himself in the company of kindred spirits. Song and Supper Rooms, Harmonic Meetings, Free and Easies, Dancing Saloons, Pleasure Gardens and entertainments of the most diverse nature formed an almost forgotten feature of London Life.

Song and Supper Rooms were regular institutions where hot meals were served throughout the evening and until two o'clock in the morning to the music of quite good concerts. These were at first supported by amateur talent, the chairman, who was often the proprietor of the place, calling on members of the audience to "obleege," but it soon became more attractive to have a regular programme performed by professionals. In any case the song and supper rooms gave their patrons a remarkably good entertainment.

The best of all the Supper Rooms was Evans's, in Covent Garden. The building, now occupied by the National Sporting Club, was originally a mansion which, after many vicissitudes had become a family hotel. Some time in the early '20s, W. C. Evans moved thither from the Cyder Cellars, turned the large "Star" supper hall into a concert-room furnished with small tables and spent a lot of money making the place attractive. His success was immediate and in a very short time Evans's became one of the most favoured and best conducted night resorts in London. A speciality was made of eggs and bacon, kidneys on toast, chops, steaks, Welsh Rarebits, devilled bones and anchovy toast. Hot brandy and water, "bitter," and half-and-half, were the favourite



Madame Sontag as Donna Anna in the Opera
of Don Juan

After Paul Delaroche



Giulia Gristi as Norma, her greatest role
After Vidal

THREE FAMOUS PRIME DONNE



Madame Persiani as Rosina, in The Barber
of Seville

After Edwin D. Smith

and most appropriate drinks. So far as the entertainment was concerned, Evans's was noted for its old-time music, glees, madrigals and part songs, ably rendered by capable artistes, and often assisted by talented members of the audience.

In 1844 Evans retired with a comfortable little fortune, and "Paddy" Green took over the place. He immediately set to work and remodelled the rooms, improved the refreshments, brightened the entertainment and eventually built a large hall in what had previously been a back yard.

Never, by any chance, was a woman to be seen in the audience, though there was a harem-like box where ladies from the residential portion of the hotel might witness the proceedings if they had a mind to do so. It was not until many years later that respectable women were seen in supper-rooms, and Evans's doors were, from the first, strictly barred to "Cyprians".

There was a homeliness and friendliness about Evans's which kept the place in favour right into the '70s, long after many of its flashier and more superficially attractive rivals had been closed by the police or had died of neglect. Hovering near the door would be old "Paddy" Green, his smiling red face crowned with a shock of white hair, offering his snuff-box and giving a personal welcome to each arrival. He knew and remembered everybody and had an apt word for each. Beyond him was the supper-room, its walls covered with paintings of varied excellence, the floor occupied by innumerable little tables for parties of two or four. The waiters, all English and clean and respectful as only English waiters can be, served the guests quickly and well, with none of the clatter and chatter which Italian and Swiss waiters have since introduced as an accompaniment to meals in Soho. No accounts were paid at the time, but as the visitors departed they settled at the door with old Skinner—a lightning calculator, who was notoriously inaccurate in his own favour.

Well-known artistes were employed to sing at Evans's. S. A. Jones and John Binge, very famous in their day, were frequently heard there; Jack Sharp, one of the greatest comics of the late '40s and early '50s kept the rooms in roars of laughter; Charles Sloman, the talented improvisatore made songs to the order of the audience; Sam Cowell, later one of the lights of the Canterbury, sang character songs such

as "The Life and Death of bold, bloody Macbeth" that brought the house down with applause. In addition to these, and as a sort of standing item in the programme, was Herr von Joel, a quaint old German who peddled cigars in a tumbler among the audience and when a lull occurred in the proceedings, would suddenly leap on the platform, hold a walking-stick to his mouth and imitate a flute, yodel or copy a hen and chickens with astonishing skill.

The company was such as could be found nowhere else in London. Almost nightly visitors at different times were Dickens, Jerrold, Thackeray, Landseer, Frank Mathews, Keeley, Yates and scores of lesser lights with their cronies. The talk was brilliant, there was never quarrelling nor boisterousness, for the utmost friendliness and camaraderie prevailed.

Nor was a visit to Evans's always without a spice of danger, for the Covent Garden porters—in those days a pretty rough crew—not infrequently sought to pass the dreary hours of waiting for the country market-carts by practising a little profitable highway robbery. As not a few of the younger visitors to Evans's prided themselves on their skill at boxing, the encounters were usually exciting.

Less respectable, perhaps, but none the less a favourite night resort was the Cyder Cellars in Maiden Lane which, until quite recently, was still in existence a little to the west of the Catholic Church of Corpus Christi. It is thus described under the name of The Fielding's Head in *Pendennis* :

"Numbers of Pen's friends frequented this very merry meeting. Worthy Cutts, the landlord, generally occupied the chair when not disabled by gout or other illness. His jolly appearance and fine voice may be remembered by some of my male readers. Many a time in my youth have I admired how Cutts the singer, after he had worked us all up to patriotic enthusiasm, by describing the way in which the brave Abercrombie received his death-wound, or made us join him in tears, which he shed liberally himself, as in faltering accents he told how 'autumn's falling leaf proclaimed the old man he must die'—how Cutts the singer became at once Cutts the landlord, and, before the applause which we were making with our fists on his table, in compliment to his heart-stirring melody, had died away, was calling 'Now, gentlemen, give your orders, the waiter's in the room—John,

a champagne cup for Mr. Green. I think, sir, you said sausages and mashed potatoes? John, attend on the gentleman.'

"Men of all sorts and conditions entered and quitted the house of entertainment. . . . Healthy country tradesmen and farmers, in London for their business, came and recreated themselves with the jolly singing and suppers of the Back Kitchen,—squads of young apprentices and assistants, the shutters being closed over the scene of their labours, came hither, for fresh air doubtless,—rakish young medical students, gallant, dashing, what is called 'loudly' dressed, and (must it be owned?) somewhat dirty—were here smoking and drinking, and vociferously applauding the songs;—young university bucks were to be found here, too, with that indescribable genteel simper which is only learned at the knees of Alma Mater;—and handsome young guardsmen, and florid bucks from the St. James's Street Clubs;—nay, senators English and Irish: and even members of the House of Peers."

John Moody, the mimic; Tom Penniket, the original "Soldier Bill;" and Labern were well-known performers at the Cyder Cellars, but most famous of all was W. G. Ross, a Scottish low comedian who, for eighteen months, was one of the most talked-of men in London. That was in 1848, when he introduced "Sam Hall" (the original of Pendennis's "Body Snatcher").

I suppose such a thing has never been heard since as Ross's singing of "Sam Hall". The clatter of plates and roar of conversation would be at its height somewhere between twelve and one o'clock. Men of all kinds and classes were there, grey-headed statesmen, men of letters, clerks from the city, boys down from 'Varsity, country parsons and Mayfair preachers (usually in mufti), dandies and their valets—such a motley crowd of men as could never be encountered in one place of entertainment nowadays. Suddenly there would be a lull in the talk, then, in a dim corner of the room, a strange, gruesome figure would be seen ascending a sort of pulpit. Dressed in rags, with a battered old hat on his head, his face stained with soot like a chimney-sweep's, a filthy, broken pipe in his mouth, Ross would look round the room with a dull, brutal scowl.

Instantly dead silence prevailed—a silence which would last for quite a minute—while the ghastly figure swayed slowly

from side to side with an occasional hollow groan. Then, without warning, the chimney-sweep, who was supposed to be in Newgate awaiting his execution, would break into that mournful chant, with its dreadful refrain, which ran in men's ears long years after they had become respectable and had forgotten those brave nights in Town :

“ My name it is Sam Hall, I'm a thief !
 My name it is Sam Hall, I'm a thief !
 My name it is Sam Hall,
 And I've robbed both great and small
 And my greeting is to all,
 Damn your eyes !

“ They've shut me up in quod, up in quod,
 They've shut me up in quod, up in quod,
 They've shut me up in quod
 For killing of a sod
 They have, so help me God,
 Damn their eyes !

“ The parson he will come, he will come,
 The parson he will come, he will come,
 The parson he will come,
 And he'll look so bloody glum,
 And he'll talk of Kingdom Come—
 Damn his eyes !

“ The Sheriff he'll come too, he'll come too,
 The Sheriff he'll come too, he'll come too,
 The Sheriff he'll come too,
 With all his ghastly crew,
 Their bloody work to do,
 Damn their eyes !

“ Then as up the drop I go, up I go,
 Then as up the drop I go, up I go,
 Then as up the drop I go,
 The swine down there below
 Will say, ' we told you so ! '
 Damn their eyes !

“ And now I'm going to hell, going to hell !
 And now I'm going to hell, going to hell !
 And now I'm going to hell,
 But what a bloody sell
 If you all go there as well !
 Damn your eyes !” *

* These verses are copied from a note taken at the time by one who heard the song. I have printed them as a curiosity, never having seen them in any book.

Another favourite of the Cyder Cellars, though before Ross's time, was the famous Thomas Hudson whose comic songs were classics, and in at least one instance gave phrases to our language—"Before you could say Jack Robinson" was the concluding line of a great favourite. "Walker the Tuppenny Postman," "The Dog's Meat Man" and "The Spider and the Fly" were others of his ditties which everyone sang in their day.

In 1858 Chief Baron Nicholson took over the Cyder Cellars for his Judge and Jury entertainment and this was the beginning of the end. Disgusting *poses plastiques*—or Living Sculptures—followed. Nicholson and these other abominations eventually obliged the police to close the place.

The Coal Hole, situated on the site now occupied by Simpson's in the Strand, was originally a house of call for coal-heavers from the riverside wharves which were later replaced by the Thames Embankment. Edmund Kean started his Wolf Club there in 1817 and the place became increasingly beloved of wits and their worshippers. Pleasant Free and Easies, or Harmonic Meetings were held there nightly, and the place is said to figure as the Cave of Harmony in Thackeray's *Newcomes*.

In 1851 Nicholson opened his Entertainment at the Coal Hole and during the crowded days and hot summer nights of the Great Exhibition year drew thousands to witness his amusing, if indecent show, the parent of many imitations less clever and far viler.

Renton Nicholson, a man of considerable though wasted parts, first established his Judge and Jury Entertainment at the Garrick's Head, Bow Street, of which he was the landlord, where the bill which was exhibited in the window, explained the style of amusement to be obtained :

"Garrick's Head and Town Hotel, Bow Street, Covent Garden, London. Gentlemen visiting London will do themselves a moral wrong, and will merit the censure of their friends at home, if they go back to the provinces without being able to say to their enquiring connections that they have witnessed the extraordinary entertainments provided for the interfection of the convivial in the magnificent saloon of the above-named hotel. Monday night, the Judge and Jury Society will hear a cause redolent of larkery after darkery, being the Queen on the prosecution of Scard against Pakenos. Tuesday and Wednesday, the concert. Thursday, the Judge and Jury Society will sit again to decide a most important case of breach of promise of marriage, 'Hitchon v.

Rogers.' Friday, the concert. Saturday (Oh! Such a night!) the Judge and Jury Society will wind up the week with a serious, momentous and strolling case of *crim. con.*,* being the affair lately so much whispered about of the Hon. Viscount Limpus v. The Hon. Powderham Pelter Plantagenet Priapus Pulverton. In this cause it is anticipated that several men of fashion and ladies in their own right will be examined. Mr. Bosanquet Thesiger, Mr. Mansfeld and Thurlo Pippis are retained for the Plaintiff, and the double of Lord Brougham and Mr. Coke Tenterden Phunk will appear for the Defendant. Mastication and Apollo every night after the theatres. Repose and matin feed half a crown, etc."

The room seated some 300 persons with due accommodation for their refreshments, and was fitted up like a court of Justice. As an usher announced the arrival of the Court, Nicholson, robed and wigged, would swish into the room and after proper legal formalities the case would start. Certain men always took the part of counsel, but the Jury was empanelled from the audience and included peers, roysterers or any gay dogs who cared to serve.

Nicholson's combination of salacious humour with a certain judicial dignity was often really funny, but the life of the entertainment was provided by a certain scamp named Brooks, a quick-change comedian of no mean ability. With amazing versatility he acted the parts of every witness as well as respondent and co-respondent, giving his evidence with a wealth of lurid detail that kept the audience in constant sniggers.

When Nicholson moved to the Cyder Cellars in 1858 the Coal Hole resumed its inoffensive character as a simple home of Free and Easies.

Rules's, always the resort of theatrical stars, is little altered in appearance or company to this day, and its unique collection of theatrical portraits and play-bills is too well known to need description.

In addition to these well-known resorts innumerable public-houses held Harmonic Meetings and Free and Easies nightly or several times a week. A description from Boz will suffice for them all :

" In a lofty room of spacious dimensions, are seated some

* Before the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, the only remedy obtainable by an injured husband was to bring an action for Criminal Conversation against his wife's seducer. *Crim. Con.*, as this was abbreviated to, was a favourite catch-word of the time and furnished the theme of many songs and stories.



The Terrific Descent of Joel il Diavolo on a single wire amid a blaze of fireworks. In the distance is the Temple of Honan of the Golden Isles, illuminated by countless fairy lamps

FIREWORKS AT VAUXHALL GARDENS IN 1846

eighty or a hundred guests knocking little pewter measures on the tables, and hammering away, with the handles of knives, as if they were so many trunk-makers. They are applauding a glee, which has just been executed by the three 'professional gentlemen' at the top of the centre table, one of whom is in the chair—the little pompous man with the bald head just emerging from the collar of his green coat. The others are seated on either side of him—the stout man with the small voice, and the thin-faced dark man in black. The little man in the chair is a most amusing personage—*such* condescending grandeur, and *such* a voice !

" 'Bass !' as the young gentleman near us with the blue stock forcibly remarks to his companion, 'bass ! I believe you ; he can go down lower than any man ; so low sometimes that you can't hear him.' And so he does. To hear him growling away, gradually lower and lower down, till he can't get back again, is the most delightful thing in the world, and it is quite impossible to witness unmoved the impressive solemnity with which he pours forth his soul in 'My 'art's in the 'Ighlands,' or 'The Brave old Hoak.' The stout man is also addicted to sentimentality, and warbles, 'Fly, fly from the world, my Bessy, with me,' or some such song, with ladylike sweetness, and in the most seductive tones imaginable.

" 'Pray give your orders, gen'l'm'n—pray give your orders'—says the pale-faced man with the red head ; and demands for 'goes' of gin and 'goes' of brandy, and pints of stout, and cigars of peculiar mildness, are vociferously made from all parts of the room. The 'professional gentlemen' are in the very height of their glory, and bestow condescending nods, or even a word or two of recognition, on the better known frequenters of the room, in the most bland and patronising manner possible.

" That little round-faced man with the brown small surtout, white stockings and shoes, is in the comic line, the mixed air of self-denial, and mental consciousness of his own powers, with which he acknowledges the call of the chair, is particularly gratifying. 'Gen'l'm'n,' says the pompous little man, accompanying the word with a knock of the president's hammer on the table : 'Gen'l'men, allow me to claim your attention—our friend, Mr. Smuggins, will oblige.' 'Bravo !' shout the company and Smuggins, after a considerable quan-

tity of coughing by way of symphony, and a most facetious sniff or two, which afford general delight, sings a comic song, with a fal-de-ral tol-de-rol chorus at the end of every verse, much longer than the verse itself. It is received with unbounded applause, and after some aspiring genius has volunteered a recitation, and failed dismally therein, the little pompous man gives another knock, and says 'Gen'l'men, we will attempt a glee, if you please.' This announcement calls forth tumultuous applause and the more energetic spirits express the unqualified approbation."

The first proper Music Hall in London was opened in 1848 by Charles Morton at the Canterbury Arms, with Saturday concerts in the large room at the rear of the tavern. Entrance to these concerts was free, sufficient profit being made on the refreshments to enable him to employ good artistes, and, after a time, to warrant opening the rooms on Thursdays as well. The following year, encouraged by the success of these concerts he utilised the bowling-green and skittle-alley of the old house as a site for the Canterbury Hall, which held 700 persons and was furnished with a simple platform, without any stage appliances. Operatic selections and favourite old ballads formed the greater part of the programme. John Caulfield was chairman, and Jongmann was musical director. First-class artistes were employed: Augustus Braham; Miss Turpin (better known as Mrs. Wallack); Sam Cowell, who used to sing "The Ratcatcher's Daughter," "Billy Barlow," and "Vilikins and his Dinah;" E. W. Mackney, one of the original of the many "nigger" comedians; and, in later times, Emily Soldene and others who became famous. The audience would join in such old glees and part songs as "The Chough and the Crow," "Tramp, tramp, o'er Moor and Fell," and so forth. It was at the Canterbury that George Leybourne made his first real hit and was engaged at the then good salary of £20 a week.

As soon as the Canterbury was safely launched, other music halls sprang into existence. The Middlesex in Drury Lane; the Philharmonic, Islington; Weston's in Holborn; all had their day of greater or less success. Then Morton opened the Oxford, which had a long and prosperous history. By the '60s there were halls of more or less repute all over London and the demand was for yet more.

In 1854 a strange Moorish building was erected in Leicester Square and opened under the unpromising name of "The Panopticon." It was a place where amusement was to be combined with instruction in the shape of model artesian wells and other rather dull curiosities. But the night-birds of the '50s were no more interested in artesian wells than are those of the present day and "The Panopticon" closed.

Early in the '60s, however, it was reopened—as the Alhambra. It was still something of a failure, though it kept alive under various managements, being largely frequented by undesirables of both sexes who made a deal of trouble and brought little money to the treasury. The principal shows were ballet dancing of an inferior quality and acrobatic displays, in which Litoard and his imitators performed wonderful feats with flying trapezes and suchlike contraptions. Refreshments were served in "The Canteen," an underground den where, amid a haze of smoke, might be met forty or fifty ladies of the ballet in all the glories of their tights, very thirsty and very friendly.

The Blue Posts in Cork Street, wildest of wild houses where the frail and fair were set in long rows along the bar counter while their admirers drank from their laps, set a fashion which was followed by the public-houses of the Haymarket and vicinity. Until well into the '70s the Haymarket was, indeed, the centre of much of the wilder night life of London, and, lit up with the glare from taverns and oyster rooms, resounding with the chatter of gay ladies and rowdy youngsters, was very different from the respectable thoroughfare of to-day.

Barron's Oyster Rooms, which flourished until the house subsided one night and smothered its owner in the ruins; Barnes, and many other houses were thronged until the early hours of morning with noisy patrons, consuming oysters by the dozen and drinking champagne by the quart. Panton Street, near-by, was full of night haunts of the worst character, though Stone's was ever a rock of respectability amid the morass of mire. The Union Arms, once better known as Tom Cribb's Parlour, was still a meeting place for the Fancy who kept it up there in 1860, much in the same way as in the days of Tom and Jerry, though the great attraction, Tom Cribb himself, died in 1844.

To revive themselves after champagne and oyster nights it was a common thing for roysterers to repair to the "Kitchen" in Castle Street (now Charing Cross Road) where *à la mode* gravy was served up in pewter pots, and good, strong English ale drove away the fumes of foreign wine.

The Argyll Rooms, Café Riche, Jimmie's, Mott's, all the scenes of the "stunning sixties" have vanished, along with their care-free men about Town who saw life through a haze of champagne.

Jimmie's—the St. James's Restaurant, to give it its full but never used title—was one of the last of the old places to exist. Jimmie's was the rendezvous of Englishmen from all parts of the world; everyone was to be met there, and the returning exile, whether in search of old friends or in order to make new ones, repaired to "Jimmie's" as soon as he had washed away the traces of his journey. Another favourite dining hotel was Limmer's in Hanover Square, largely frequented by racing and gambling men.

The Argyll Assembly Rooms stood on the site now occupied by the Trocadero Restaurant. A shilling was charged for admission; on the ground level was a dancing floor, above were galleries with plush-covered benches in alcoves, and at one end was the orchestra. Dancing was more or less confined to a few experts, the real attraction of the Rooms being the facilities they afforded for assignations, as well as the light and cheeriness of the place, enhanced by the smiles of the most beautiful and notorious courtesans of the day.

Another resort of a similar nature was the Holborn Casino where amid gas, gilding and mirrors, the beautiful, golden-haired Mabel Grey, "Skittles," and others of their calling were nightly surrounded by wealthy admirers. Until it became the Marionette Theatre, in 1852, the Adelaide Gallery, now Gatti's Restaurant, was another dancing assembly room, though more respectable than the majority of such places.

Half an hour at the Argyll over a bottle of wine was usually sufficient for the pleasure-seeker. Having found a kindred spirit of either, though probably the opposite sex, he might suggest looking into the Café Riche before proceeding to Mott's, Cremorne, or some other place of diversion, public or private. Fun at the Riche was fast and furious, while

oysters and champagne laid a good groundwork for wilder adventures.

Mott's, in a quiet house off Foley Street, was a dancing and assembly room open only to men in Society. As at Almack's, birth and not money secured admission, and old Freer, the manager, seemed to know by instinct who was to be admitted and who turned away from the unostentatious door. It used to be told of him that on one occasion a wealthy and aspiring hatter presented himself, immaculately dressed and outwardly possessed of every qualification to gain him admission to Mott's. He tendered his card to Freer, who, as usual, was lurking near the door. The old man did not so much as look at the pasteboard, but with a bland yet decisive smile waved the visitor away, observing, "Not necessary, sir, not necessary. I have your name in my hat!"

The ball-room of Mott's was a glass-domed octagon, out of which opened the supper-room, where cold chicken and champagne formed the staple diet. The most beautiful actresses and demi-mondaines in London were to be found at Mott's, accompanied by their patrons of the moment. There might be seen sweet Nelly Fowler in the prime of her beauty—Nelly, who drove a brisk trade with love-sick youths who sent her their handkerchiefs to be placed beneath her pillow of a night, that they might be scented with the wonderful natural perfume of her body at ten guineas apiece; Nelly Clifford, Baby Jordan, pretty and witty Skittles, and many another long-forgotten enchantress. It was at Mott's, too, that the wild Marquis of Hastings one night let loose a bagful of sewer rats while dancing was at its height, a confederate turning off the gas at the meter as soon as the womenfolk had seen what horror was let loose among them.

Less aristocratic than Mott's or the Argyll, were the *Soirées Dansantes* given by John Caldwell at his place in Dean Street, Soho. Ostensibly to provide harmless dancing for the "working classes," Caldwell's was little more than a convenient rendezvous, where pretty milliners, dressmakers and servant-girls might find wealthy admirers to appreciate their charms. It only cost eightpence to get in and there was a convenient refreshment room on the ground floor where champagne and other "revivers" added zest to the dancing upstairs.

One of the rowdiest and most disreputable dancing saloons was the "Pic", which stood on the site now occupied by the Criterion bar. Hat smashing and horseplay were the order of the day—or rather night—and it was a select meeting place for gentry of the Kangaroo type. "The Kangaroo" was a very well-known figure in the London night life of the late '50s and '60s. He was a gigantic mulatto who had learned the rudiments of boxing at Langham's Academy and used his knowledge to bully whomsoever he thought worth the trouble. Every night he would go the rounds of the places of entertainment—the Pavilion, Alhambra, Café Riche, Argyll Rooms or Cremorne—and, approaching any table where he saw food or drink to his liking, help himself and knock down his victim if there was any remonstrance. It is satisfactory to know that he was very soundly thrashed on more than one occasion by young men who knew how to handle their fists.

Of the many night clubs there is little need to give any description—they were about as futile, silly and low as night clubs before or since. Kate Hamilton's was, however, worthy of mention, for in the later '50s and early '60s she was a sort of queen of West End night life. An excessively ugly woman, weighing some twenty stone, she presided over a salon in Coventry Street (near the Tube Station) where drink was served to wealthy lovers and their lasses, while Kate, sitting on a throne, placed upon a dais at one end, drank champagne and chatted to her courtiers. To have been received by Kate Hamilton and permitted to stand "sham" to everyone in the place was an indisputable hall-mark of being a Man about Town. The salon was respectably conducted and there was little real harm to be seen at Kate's, and though the police inspected the place nightly, they had too much genuine business to look after elsewhere to trouble their heads about a lot of foolish youths who chose to waste their money on the seductive Florries and Rosies and Connies who gathered at Kate Hamilton's.

It was no unusual thing for the younger bloods to make up a party and end the night with a visit to the dens of evil in St. Giles or farther East. Sometimes a detective would be induced by a fiver to accompany them, but as often as not the young men, who were most of them pretty nimble with

their fists, ventured even as far as the infamous Ratcliff Highway, where at that time harlotry and assassination reigned almost uncurbed. Money and drink, squandered with a free hand, served to pave the adventurers' way, but fights were not infrequent and wild scenes often ended with emptied pockets and broken bones.

Known only to the select few was Faultless's cock-pit in Endell Street, where Hastings and other men of a sporting turn would match their birds or bet on the results of a main.

In the '30s and early '40s London was cursed with a number of gaming-houses, which attracted men of all ranks and positions. Chief among them was Crockford's, the rendezvous of wealthier men, and almost as much a club as a gambling den. Founded in 1827 by a retired fishmonger, William Crockford, who had made a fortune in gambling and betting at Newmarket, it became one of the finest gambling clubs in Europe, and its rooms in St. James's Street (now occupied by the Devonshire Club) were the most sumptuous ever seen. The best cooks in Europe were retained there, at one time the immortal Ude and later the wondrous Francatelli, and the dining- and supper-rooms were nightly crowded with Cabinet Ministers, peers, social leaders and men of distinction. Entrance to Crockford's was difficult. The number of candidates being out of all proportion to the vacancies, a man of large fortune and good birth might often have to wait some years before a chance came of being admitted.

Supper was served throughout the Parliamentary season from midnight to 5 A.M., and every dish and drink that could gratify the most fastidious taste were to be obtained. The gaming-tables were at the end of a long suite of exquisitely appointed rooms, though many members of Crockford's rarely visited them. It was customary, however, for those who frequently supped at the club to throw a ten-pound note on the gaming-table at the close of the season, and leave it there.

"No one can describe the splendour and excitement of the early days of 'Cockey,'" writes Gronow. "A supper of the most exquisite kind, prepared by the famous Ude, and accompanied by the best wines in the world, together with every luxury of the season, was furnished gratis. The members of the club included all the celebrities of England, and

at the gay and festive board, which was constantly replenished from midnight to early dawn, the most brilliant sallies of wit, the most agreeable conversation, the most interesting anecdotes, interspersed with grave political discussion and acute logical reasoning on every conceivable subject proceeded from the soldiers, scholars, statesmen, poets and men of pleasure who, when the 'House was up' and balls and parties at an end, delighted to finish the evening with a little supper and a good deal of hazard at old 'Crockey's.'

"In the play room might be heard the clear ringing voice of that agreeable reprobate, Tom Duncombe, as he cheerfully called 'Seven,' and the powerful hand of the vigorous Sefton in throwing for a ten. There might be noted the scientific dribbling of a four by 'King Allen,' the tremendous backing of nines and fives by Ball Hughes and Auriol, the enormous stakes played for by Lords Lichfield and Chesterfield, George Payne, Sir St. Vincent Cotton, D'Orsay, and George Anson, and, above all, the gentlemanly bearing and calm and unmoved demeanour, under losses or gains, of all the men.

"The old fishmonger himself, seated snug and sly at his desk in a corner of the room, watchful as the dragon that guarded the golden apples of the Hesperides, would only give credit to sure and approved signatures. Who that ever entered that dangerous little room can ever forget the large green table of the croupiers, Page, Darking and Bacon, with their suave manners, sleek appearance, stiff white neckcloths and the almost miraculous quickness and dexterity with which they swept away the money of the unfortunate punters when the fatal cry of 'Deuce Ace,' 'Aces,' or 'Sixes out,' was heard in answer to the caster's bold cry of 'Seven,' or 'Nine,' or 'Five's the Main.'"

Vast sums of money were lost at the green baize table in the gaming-room. Huge piles of notes represented but too often not only the wealth of the man who was playing, but the patrimony of yet unborn generations. There were several suicides of ruined gamblers, and the strenuous life told on those who played with anything like regularity.

Crockford's was run honestly enough, but there were many gambling hells where debauchery and cheating were indulged to the utmost:

"It was nearly midnight when they rushed out, wild,

burning with wine, their blood boiling, and their brains on fire, to the gaming-table.

“Here they encountered another party, mad like themselves. The excitement of play, hot rooms, and glaring lights, was not calculated to allay the fever of the time. In that giddy whirl of noise and confusion, the men were delirious. Who thought of money, ruin, or the morrow, in the savage intoxication of the moment? More wine was called for, glass after glass was drained, their parched and scalding mouths were cracked with thirst. Down poured the wine like oil on blazing fire. And still the riot went on. The debauchery gained its height: glasses were dashed upon the floor, by hands that could not carry them to lips; oaths were shouted out by lips which could scarcely form the words to vent them in; drunken losers cursed and roared; some mounted on the tables, waving bottles above their heads, and bidding defiance to the rest; some danced, some sang, some tore the cards and raved. Tumult and frenzy reigned supreme; when a noise arose that drowned all others, and two men, seizing each other by the throat, struggled into the middle of the room.

“It was a profligate haunt, of the worst repute, and not a place in which such an affair was likely to awaken any sympathy for either party, or to call forth any further remonstrance or interposition. Elsewhere, its further progress would have been instantly prevented, and time allowed for sober and cool reflection; but not there. Disturbed in their orgies, the party broke up; some reeled away with looks of tipsy gravity; others withdrew, noisily discussing what had occurred; the gentlemen of honour who lived upon their winnings remarked to each other, as they went out, that Hawk was a good shot; and those who had been most noisy fell fast asleep upon the sofa.”—(*Nickleby*, 50.)

The scandal of such places and the ruin and misery they caused attracted the attention of Parliament in 1844 and such energetic measures were taken to suppress gambling that all the hells were closed and with them Crockford's.

Some fourteen years later, however, the Raleigh Club was opened, as a sort of convenience for officers returned from the Crimean War, and by the early '60s it had developed into a night haunt where gambling was carried on to a large

extent. The Raleigh consisted of a long room, round the walls of which were arm chairs for those who, wearied from the exertions of Mott's, Cremorne or the Argyll, wished to rest themselves and partake of brandy and soda, with bacon and toast sandwiches. In the centre was a long table where *écarté* was played. The Derby week was the time to see the Raleigh gaming-table at its prime. Officers young and old, men about town, professional gamesters, silly debauchees, old roués and young scatterbrains crowded and jostled round the tables, stretching out eager hands rustling with "fivers," "tenners," "hundreds," feverishly watching every turn in the play. At the tables sat the players with their bankers at their sides, and beyond the circle of punters was a shady fringe of "fielders"—men who never played but watched the game intently and laid their bets on every turn of the cards.

But as all good things come to a finish, so did the night reveller often end his dissipation at "Mother H.'s," "The Finish" or "Jessop's." Jessop's was a night house which lasted on until the '80s, when the building in Fountain Court, Strand—practically opposite the old Fountain Tavern, now Savoy Buildings—was taken over by the *Echo* newspaper. Oysters, devilled bones and good sharp bitter were partaken of before clambering into an early hansom and giving the order "home."

CHAPTER VIII

THE GREAT EXHIBITION

Its Origin—The Prince Consort—Building the Crystal Palace—The Opening Day—The Queen's Account—The Interior—London in 1851—Its Success—The Sydenham Palace—The Exhibition of 1862.

THE Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations, commonly known as the Great Exhibition of 1851, was one of the most important events of the 19th century. It stirred the whole nation, and in four brief months completely changed the average Englishman's outlook on the world. Throughout the country there were scores of thousands who had never travelled a dozen miles from their own homes nor ever would have done so had not the Great Exhibition drawn them to London. A whole brood of provincial prejudices and ignorances was demolished, the pulsations of the great world were made to throb in the quietude of remote localities and the nation's mind was broadened to an extent it is now difficult to realise. Inhabitants of small villages, who were accustomed to look upon men from the other side of the same county as little better than foreigners, came to London and rubbed elbows with Frenchmen and Italians, Americans and Colonials, Turks in fezes and Chinamen in pigtails and silken robes, all crowding the narrow pavements of the City streets; and the whole of Britain awoke from the self-satisfaction of splendid isolation to find that she was not the only country in the world nor had the monopoly of turning out marketable goods.

Though new to this country the idea of exhibitions had been familiar for some time on the Continent. There had been several industrial exhibitions in Belgium and Paris, and, in 1849, the second French Republic had carried out one on a larger scale than had hitherto been conceived. At the end of the same year on the occasion of the visit of members of the British Association to Birmingham, Bingley House was

opened to the public, and a collection of industrial produce exhibited within its walls. Much good was done thereby. Free orders were distributed to the poorer of the working classes, as also to the pupils of the School of Design, to the members of the association, and a few other public bodies and schools; and about the same time originated the idea of making the metropolis the temporary *dépôt* of specimens of produce of the industry, not of this country merely, but of the world at large—of establishing a great Exhibition to represent the progress attained in the arts of life and civilisation at the close of the first half of the nineteenth century.

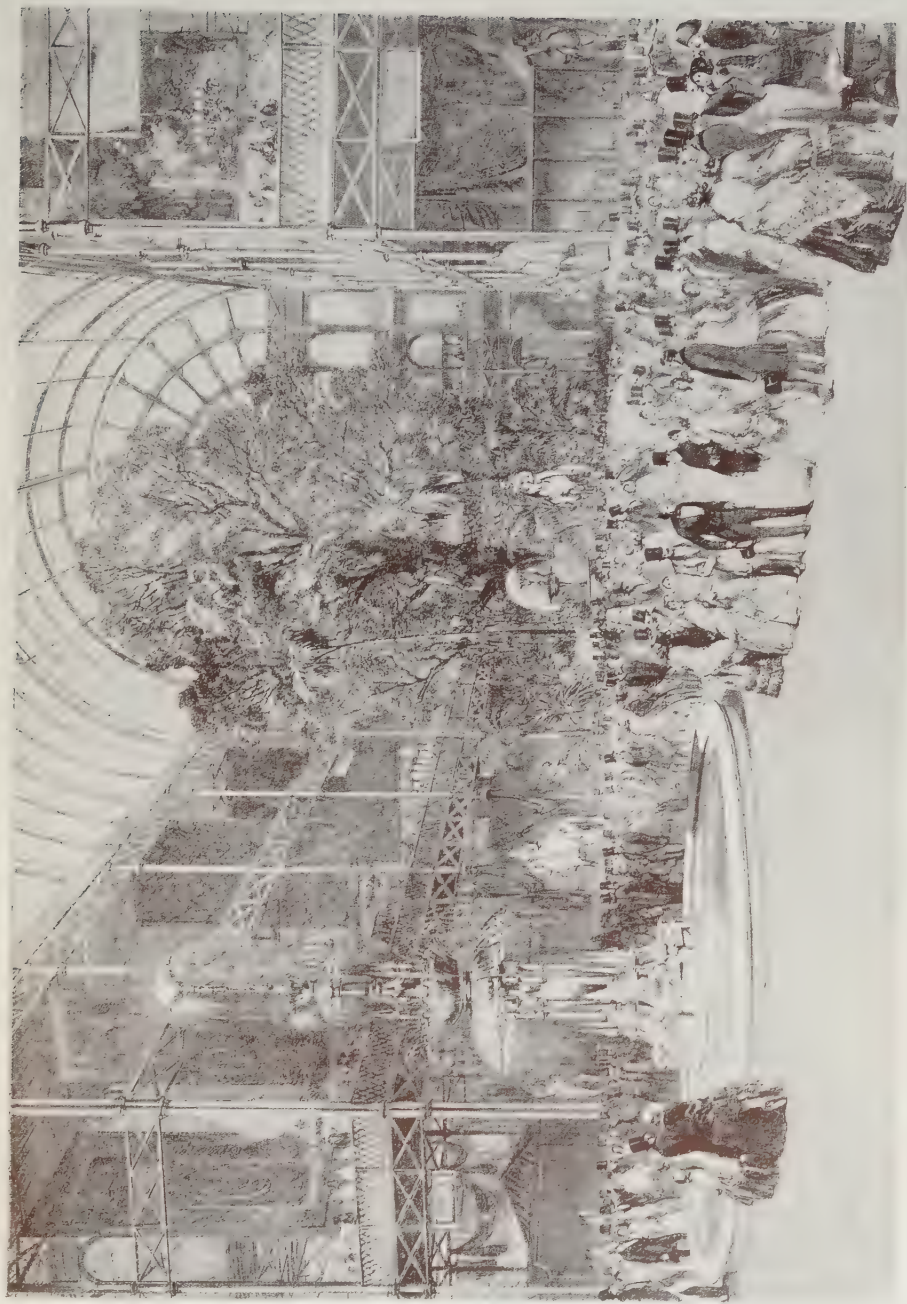
To the Prince Consort alone must be ascribed the conception and ultimate success of the idea on such a vast scale. The scheme appealed to his methodical mind, and throwing himself into it heart and soul he spared himself no pains in bringing his plans to a tangible result. His unflagging energy and persistence overcame every difficulty that arose, conquered the traditional apathy of the English manufacturers and the suspicion of foreigners and eventually aroused the whole-hearted enthusiasm of the country.

On the 25th of January 1850, a meeting was held at the Mansion House, with the Lord Mayor in the chair, which unanimously carried a resolution "That the proposal of His Royal Highness, Prince Albert, to open an Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, in the year 1851, in this metropolis, is a measure in harmony with the public feeling and entitled to the general support of the community; and it is eminently calculated to improve manufactures, and to aid in diffusing the principles of universal peace."

Lord John Russell carried another resolution to the effect that "In the opinion of this meeting, the arrangements made for this Exhibition should be on a scale commensurate with the importance of the occasion; and the large funds requisite for this purpose ought to be provided by the voluntary contributions of individuals rather than from the public revenue."

The appeal to the public for subscriptions proved a comparative failure. In spite of fine speeches in the City and in Westminster, the money came slowly dribbling in, and the Royal Commissioners and the Executive Committee saw insolvency staring them in the face.

After a suspense of some weeks, a *Deus ex machina* appeared



THE GREAT EXHIBITION OF 1851. MAIN AVENUE OF THE CRYSTAL PALACE, LOOKING EAST

at a moment when the Great Exhibition was vanishing like a dissolving view before the faces of a crowd of noble and wealthy Commissioners, in the person of Samuel Morton Peto, M.P., who gave his guarantee for £50,000 ; after which the Prince and Court, and City magnates, Lord Overstone, the Rothschilds, and others followed, until the amount reached £200,000. On this security the bankers willingly advanced the needful funds.

Peto's help was most timely. The subscriptions paid never reached £70,000 ; for although the Exhibition was well supported by the press, and popular with the working and middle classes, it met with considerable opposition from the great body of the upper classes, the clergy, and the agricultural community ; and found very lukewarm countenance among the country traders. Even when manufacturing districts became warm and earnest, ports like Liverpool and Bristol remained cold and parsimonious.

No sooner had the question of money been settled than the great question of where the Exhibition was to be held arose, and much bitter controversy took place. Ultimately the Government fixed upon Hyde Park and selected an area of some 20 acres between Rotten Row and Knightsbridge, somewhat to the East of the spot now occupied by the Albert Memorial.

In the meanwhile the building committee had advertised for plans of an appropriate structure. Artists in various countries immediately set to work ; and, misled by the announcement of the committee that they contemplated a brick or a stone building of permanent character, an immense amount of ingenuity, invention, and hard labour was utterly thrown away. When the designs were publicly exhibited, it was known that the designers had worked on an erroneous basis ; and although many of them combined magnificence and beauty with usefulness, all were set aside in favour of Paxton's scheme of a gigantic structure of iron and glass.

As a matter of fact the actual building of the Exhibition attracted almost as much attention as the contents. The use of iron in such vast quantities for building had not hitherto been considered, while the acres of glass appealed to the imagination and aroused the incredulity of thousands who were indifferent to the actual exhibits. In far corners of

England and Scotland village wiseacres frankly disbelieved all accounts of the wonder palace brought back by venturesome souls who had gone to London, and persisted in treating the whole thing as a hoax, maintaining that those who had been taken in by it were too ashamed to do other than carry on the lie.

Paxton's plans were approved in July and by the middle of August hoardings were run up round the chosen area. Messrs. Fox, Henderson & Co., of Smethwick, set to work on the immense iron framework, consisting of over 3000 columns and 1245 wrought iron girders for the roof. There were 45 miles of sash bars and 1,073,760 square feet of glass.

The whole building was erected without a single scaffold pole, a pair of shears and a derrick being the only means employed for hoisting the materials. When the structure was finished some 500 painters were set to work. The under sides of the girders were painted red and the columns yellow and blue. The exhibitors' stalls were draped with red cloth or pink calico, and unbleached calico blinds prevented the glare of the summer sunshine through the glass roof.

When all was ready the exhibitors arranged their goods. The Western side of the building was allotted to the products of England and her Colonies; the Eastern to foreign manufactures; the centre was occupied by statuary, fountains and plants, as well as the huge elms which had been included as they stood in the Park. The Exhibits were ranged in four classes—Raw Materials, Machinery, Manufactures and Fine Arts.

The final touches to the Crystal Palace, as it was christened by Douglas Jerrold, were made on the night of April 30, and everyone awaited with excitement the State opening on the morrow by the Queen.

The first of May was a bright, clear day, cool but sunny, and by early morning all London was pouring towards the Park Gates, which were to be opened at six o'clock. Streams of carriages from every part of the metropolis, filled with gaily dressed women and their escorts, drove slowly through the solid phalanx of pedestrians, who moved in a great mass up Piccadilly or Constitution Hill, to Knightsbridge and Rotten Row—all intent on catching a view of the Queen and her suite as they drove to open the Palace of Industry. The line

of route was kept by police and Horse Guards, and the few houses in Grosvenor Place and Hyde Park Corner from which a view of the procession could be seen, were crowded to the very roof. Precisely at eleven o'clock the Horse Guards began to widen the streets for the procession, and half an hour later the Queen with the Prince Consort and their suites drove out of Buckingham Palace, in pair-horse carriages, and passed pretty smartly along the route, to the great disappointment of many who got but a hurried glimpse of the Queen they had come so far to see.

Meanwhile, within the building, a picturesque group was waiting round the platform on which the royal chair had been placed. Heralds in their tabards, ministers and officers of state in their uniforms and robes, foreign ambassadors wonderfully attired, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen in full panoply—all stood waiting for the coming of the Queen. Suddenly a flourish of trumpets announced the approach of the royal party at the North Door, and then the Queen and Prince Consort entered, leading the Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal by the hand. Instantly the whole place shook with the deafening cheers of the spectators, which even drowned the roar of guns fired from across the Serpentine. The Queen was greatly moved by the enthusiastic loyalty evinced by her reception, and bowed again and again while the thunder of the cheers rolled on. This is her own account of the occasion :

“The Park presented a wonderful spectacle, crowds streaming through it, carriages and troops passing, quite like the Coronation day. . . . I never saw Hyde Park look as it did. A few drops of rain fell just as we started ; but before we came near the Crystal Palace the sun shone and gleamed upon the gigantic edifice upon which the flags of all the nations were floating. The glimpse of the transept through the iron gates, the waving palms, flowers, statues, myriads of people filling the galleries and seats around, with a flourish of trumpets as we entered, gave us a sensation which I can never forget. . . . The sight as we came to the middle, where the steps and the chair (which I did not sit on) were placed, with the beautiful Crystal Fountain just in front of it, was magical—so vast, so glorious, so touching. The tremendous cheers, the joy expressed in every face, the immensity of the building,

the mixture of palms, flowers, trees, statues, fountains—the organ (with 200 instruments and 600 voices which sounded like nothing) and my beloved husband the author of this Peace festival—all this was moving indeed.

“Albert left my side after ‘God Save the Queen’ had been sung and at the head of the Commissioners—a curious assemblage of political and distinguished men—read me the report, which is a long one and to which I read a short answer. After this the Archbishop of Canterbury offered up a short and appropriate prayer, followed by the Hallelujah Chorus, during which the Chinese mandarin came forward and made his obeisance. This concluded, the procession began. It was beautifully arranged and of great length—the prescribed order being exactly adhered to. The Nave was full, which had not been intended; but still there was no difficulty, and the whole long walk from one end to the other was made in the midst of continued and deafening cheers and waving of handkerchiefs. Many Frenchmen called out ‘Vive la Reine!’ The organs were but little heard, but the Military band at one end had a very fine effect as we passed along. They played the march from *Athalie*. We returned to our own place and Albert told Lord Breadalbane to declare that the Exhibition was open.”

The mandarin alluded to by Her Majesty was a Chinese visitor to the Exhibition who, carried away by the solemnity of the ceremony, appeared to feel it his duty to pay reverence to the Queen, and advanced towards her alone, with many ceremonious bows. According to *The Examiner* his admirable nonchalance and composure so impressed the diplomatic corps that when they advanced to pay their devoirs to the Sovereign he was asked to join them as the representative of China, and quietly and in a dignified manner, acquitted himself of the honour thus thrust upon him.

The arrangement of the building was very simple. The entire ground area was divided off into a central nave, four side aisles and a number of courts and avenues. The general effect on entering was remarkable. In the words of Sir Theodore Martin:

“Its vastness was measured by the huge elms, giants of the Park, which rose far into the air with all their wealth of foliage, as free and unconfined as if there was nothing between



Crowds passing Hyde Park Corner on their way to the Crystal Palace



Up from the country, and hardly able to believe their eyes
SHILLING DAY AT THE GREAT EXHIBITION

them and the open sky. The splash of fountains, the luxuriance of tropical foliage, the play of colours from the choicest flowers, carried on into the vistas of the nave by the rich dyes of carpets and stuffs from the costliest looms, were enough to fill the eye and mind with a pleasure never to be forgotten."

The glass fountain in the centre of the Nave was the object of boundless wonder and admiration to visitors from remote country towns and villages. Its glitter and lustre, visible from every part of the floor, attracted attention as soon as one entered, and "The Fountain" became the rendezvous for parties and stragglers. Another great attraction was the Koh-i-noor diamond which had but recently been presented to the Queen by the East India Company.

There were about 15,000 exhibitors and the objects shown illustrated every conceivable branch of human industry from engines to dolls. Refreshments were obtainable at reasonable prices, and parties were organised to take people round and explain the various exhibits; nothing was left undone which could contribute to the success of the affair commercially and educationally. Each day of the week had some different feature. Monday was the great day for shopkeepers and labourers, who came in vast multitudes, and gaped at the treasures displayed; Tuesday was the country folks' day; Wednesday and Thursday were the quietest of the shilling days; Friday was a half-crown day and much favoured by season-ticket holders and people who wished to examine the exhibits with some minuteness. Saturday was a half-guinea day and devoted to fashion, the naves and galleries being filled with bath-chairs, which enabled queens of society to view the Exhibition at their ease.

The Crystal Palace was open for twenty-three weeks, during which over 6,000,000 visitors passed through the turnstiles, bringing in a revenue of half a million pounds sterling.

Never had London been so full. The few hotels were soon overflowing and every boarding-house crammed to the roof. Private lodgings fetched a premium and the ever-increasing influx of visitors was forced to find accommodation in the outskirts of the city. The streets were almost impassable with traffic and presented strange sights, for many of the foreign visitors wore their national costumes, most of which

have now disappeared for ever. For the first time the American twang and drawl became familiar to Londoners !

An attempt to raise the prices of lodging and food was soon put a stop to ; indeed, the only people who tried to profiteer in a disgraceful fashion were the omnibus companies who raised their fares twenty-five per cent. without so much as giving any pretext.

Despite their outcries that the Exhibition was going to ruin them, the amusement vendors and theatrical managers contrived to reap a large harvest during the six months the Crystal Palace remained open. Owing to the difficulties of transport and the practical impossibility of controlling the traffic after dark, the Exhibition was closed at dusk every day, and throngs of sightseers streamed away from it down Piccadilly to the theatres, panoramas or whatever else appealed to their taste.

In addition to the usual Opera nights four times a week, Her Majesty's gave a number of special performances at which Lablache, Sims Reeves, and Madame Sontag sang, while Carlotta Grisi was the central figure of the ballet. The smaller theatres were filled nightly to overflowing ; Batty's and Astley's Hippodrome performed to full houses of enraptured patrons and even the panoramas, of which there were no less than twenty in London alone, lured crowds with the beauties of Oregon and California, the Overland Route to India, the Earthquake at Lisbon or London and Paris by Night.

Thackeray lectured on the English Humorists at Willis's Rooms every Thursday morning ; Mrs. Fanny Kemble gave her Shakespeare readings in the same place on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Less intellectual but no less attractive to the majority were the entertainments on the Chinese Junk, anchored off the Temple Steps, where the Mandarin Hsing gave Feasts of Lanterns, at which Juggling, Music and Chinese Illuminations were to be enjoyed for the entrance fee of a shilling. In the Chinese Gallery, opposite Albert Gate, was to be seen Pwan-Ye-Koo, a lady " with feet only two and a half inches in length ! "

For those who could afford it, Soyer's Symposium of all Nations—in other words—restaurant—was a pleasant rendezvous after the heat and crowd of the Crystal Palace just

across the road. This very energetic chef took over Gore House, where Lady Blessington had so recently held court, and turned it into a luxurious restaurant where exquisite dishes could be enjoyed in the shady gardens or magnificent suites of rooms.

England has never experienced anything like the enthusiasm of those Exhibition days; it was universal and unique. As a writer remarked: "All were fascinated by the exhibition of 1851. Banquets were the order of the day. All things pointed to peace and friendship. The orators of the human race met and declared that the millennium was about to come. France and England were connected by the telegraphic cable. A peace congress sat in Exeter Hall. Females made their appearance in Bloomer costumes. In the House of Commons, Mr. Cobden's motion for disarmament between France and England received the sanction of the Government."

After expenses had been paid the Great Exhibition left a balance of £213,000 to be applied to the promotion of industrial art. This sum was devoted to the purchase of the sites now occupied by the South Kensington Museum and the Albert Hall.

The Great Exhibition closed on October the 15th and its contents were immediately removed. The Commissioners offered the building to the Government, who refused it, and the following year it was taken to a private estate at Sydenham, where Paxton and others re-erected it, with certain improvements, such as making arched instead of flat roofs, and three transepts instead of the original single one.

The Queen opened the new Crystal Palace on June 19, 1854. The grounds had been delightfully laid out with taste and skill and the fountains, larger and finer than any in the world, were the centre of universal admiration, partly shared by those huge and hideous figures of historical animals, which were once grimly ferocious, but are now merely shabby.

Fireworks which threw those of Vauxhall and Cremorne into the shade, became a feature of the entertainments, balloons ascended, piloted by Glaisher, Green and the old aeronauts, and everything was done to attract people and make the place a paying concern. Splendid concerts were given every week, the Handel festivals were inaugurated and less classic tastes were catered for by innumerable side-shows.

The early days of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham were full of promise. The beauty of the situation, the excellent entertainments, the delight of picnicking in such luxuriant grounds drew crowds in the summer holidays and light evenings. Within doors the place was made attractive with statuary, plants and works of art. A theatre was installed and during the winter months popular concerts were given every Saturday afternoon in the Concert Hall.

Those Saturday afternoon concerts, which started in the September of 1855, were very excellent and attracted such large audiences that special fast trains were run down to the Crystal Palace from Victoria and Addison Road. August Manns, for so many years the conductor, was a musical director of genius, and during his regime there was no better music to be found in London than at the Palace.

On either side of the nave were the various courts—Egyptian, Greek, Roman, etc., of which there are still remains. Lightning photographers, producing their very charming portraits on glass, had stalls or studios in various corners of the Palace; there were children's stalls, where mechanical toys of quaint ingenuity and strangely-garbed dolls were sold by a bearded magician; there were moving models and all sorts of curious devices for attracting people and their pennies. At Christmas a good pantomime was usually produced and Father Christmas made his way among the juvenile audience distributing little keepsakes of the Crystal Palace.

The subsequent lamentable history of the Palace does not enter into the sphere of this story. Throughout the '60s it was a great resort for rich and poor, high and low, and was a pleasure-ground such as no other country could boast.

The second Industrial Exhibition—that of 1862—was a failure. The buildings at South Kensington, between the Cromwell Exhibition and Prince Albert Roads seemed insignificant after the wonder palace of glass in Hyde Park, the novelty of the idea had worn off and the attendance was but poor. Most of the exhibits were of machinery and firearms, and the models of engines, ships, docks and so forth appealed only to men. The recent death of the Prince Consort, so closely associated with its predecessor, cast a gloom on the Exhibition and it played no part in the social life of London.

CHAPTER IX

A GLIMPSE AT THE THEATRES

Public Taste—The Patent Theatres—No Luxury—Late Hours—Drury Lane—Bunn—Macready—Covent Garden—The Two Keans—Haymarket Theatre—Buckstone—Lord Dundreary—The Olympic—Madame Vestris—Charles Mathews—Frederick Robson—Wigan—The Lyceum—The Adelphi—Wright and Bedford—The St. James's—Rachel—The Princess's—Charles Kean and his Shakespeare Revival—Burlesques—Pantomimes—Some Players—The Royal Opera—Great Singers—Covent Garden as an Opera House—The Ballet—Taglioni, Elssler and Cerito—The Pas de Quatre.

WITH so little space to devote to so large a subject it is impossible to give more than a glimpse at the London stage and the actors of our period. Then, as now, all real talent gravitated to London, where it mostly remained. Country towns were catered for by stock companies following definite circuits, often by the Crummleses and Snellicies whose pleasant, Bohemian, hand-to-mouth life has been once and for ever described in *Nicholas Nickleby*.

In the '30s the public taste of London in matters of the theatre was pretty well as bad as could be, as evinced in the universal popularity of Douglas Jerrold's "Black-eyed Susan." Whatever the reason, the drama was badly supported, and, as this chapter will unfold, the story of practically every theatre during this period was one of varying ill-success.

Until 1843 the only two theatres in London possessing Patents enabling them to keep open throughout the year were Drury Lane and Covent Garden. The remaining ten or a dozen places of amusement, which were only supposed to be open for legitimate drama during the summer months, succeeded in evading the Law by the introduction of sufficient dances and music to enable them to call whatever play they produced a "burletta." This very convenient term included opera, farce and burlesque and only excluded pure tragedy and comedy.

But in Patent or other theatres public taste was not in favour of good plays and until well into the '40s generally followed the Queen in preferring Van Amburgh's performing lions and dancing pigs to Macready's Shakespearean revivals. Acrobats, jugglers, human salamanders and, above all, circuses were what the people wanted and what managers were eventually forced to give them. Shakespeare, reduced to snappy curtain raisers, and six- or eight-act dramas were the order of the day, and even these did not pay the lessees.

The sudden wave of Puritanism that accompanied the accession of Queen Victoria made matters worse. The stage lost caste on account of its so-called immoral tendencies and a growing enthusiasm for music emptied the theatres and filled the opera houses and concert rooms. It was not until well into the '60s that the stage began to resume its prestige and win back its rightful place as part of the Nation's culture.

There was little luxury in the Early Victorian theatres. Except in Her Majesty's Opera House there were no stalls, the pit coming right up to the orchestra and its seats being nothing better than hard wooden benches without backs. The whole floor smelled strongly of oranges and beer, for between acts fruit girls and pot-boys supplied the audience with those refreshments when required. The curtain was often merely of simple green baize and, when tragedies were being played, the floorcloth was conventionally of the same material. Most of the houses, such as the Haymarket, were lighted only with candles or lamps, and the much debated practice of lowering lights during the performance of the play had not been introduced.

Those who did go to the play, however, must have made a good audience. From the first bar of the overture to the final fall of the curtain a breathless, rapt attention and perfect order reigned. "There was no chattering," says Clement Scott, "no conversation, no blasé nor indifferent tones, no breaks in the interest between the actor and the audience—caused by that fatal diversion of late dining and late arriving stalls."

"Give me the days when I played to the pit," observed Charles Mathews. "The stalls are profitable, but the pit was pulsating."

On the occasions of a Royal visit the manager would

receive his guests at the entrance and conduct them to their box, performing the somewhat difficult feat of walking upstairs backwards with a lighted candle in each hand.

Performances began generally at seven and about nine o'clock persons were admitted to the pit and boxes at half price. Matinées were unknown until E. T. Smith started them at Drury Lane in 1852 when he was producing "Uncle Tom's Cabin" to crowded houses.

There was no stinting in the programmes. It was no unusual thing to play five pieces in one night, alternating two-act comedies with farces; or to give two five-act comedies with a short curtain raiser. When, for instance, Lytton's "Money" was running at the Haymarket in 1841, it was followed by "Foreign Affairs," and that in its turn by "The Boarding School"; the same company, including such stars as Mrs. Stirling, Miss Priscilla Horton, Strickland and Webster performing in all three pieces. The programme was changed almost every night and few pieces had a longer consecutive run than thirty nights.

The Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, was under a cloud when Alexander Lee, the well-known musician and composer, became lessee in 1830. Four years had elapsed since Elliston had been driven from the house by a parcel of soulless and silly shareholders, who extorted a ruinous rent and ejected him when he was behind with a payment, and during that four years the Lane had sunk to the depths under the management of Stephen Price, a singularly vulgar American, whose only claim to fame is that he introduced Charles Kean to the London boards, on October the 1st, 1827, and gave the old dying king of clowns, Joe Grimaldi, a farewell benefit, by which he realised £600. Lee was in occupation for only a short time, however, being succeeded in 1831 by Alfred Bunn.

Bunn—the poet Bunn, as *Punch* dubbed him—was a sharp business man and a born showman. Insolent, ignorant and vulgar, he was always quarrelling with his actors, on one occasion so enraging Macready that the actor assaulted him in his own room. Under Bunn's management Drury Lane became a veritable palace of entertainment, during the many years he ran the theatre he gave the public an extraordinary variety of programme, from grand opera to tight-rope dancing and lion taming. He produced the works of Rossini and

Donizetti in English, and it was under his management that Balfe's first opera, "The Siege of Rochelle," was performed in 1835. But sharp as he was, Drury Lane was too much for Bunn, and in 1841 he relinquished the theatre, hopelessly in debt. That same year Macready took over the management.

William Charles Macready was then at the height of his fame. He had made his first success in 1816, as Richard II, and thereafter became one of the foremost rivals of Edmund Kean. His Shakespeare renderings were tremendous, and the wonder of his rich voice, ringing with passion or pathos, the almost overwhelming life and vigour he put into his work, made on all who saw him an impression that time could never dim. Macready did away with the old chanting of verses which had been the stage tradition until his time. He declaimed his lines, put new force into them, lived them and carried away his audience. It is recorded that just before the great Shylock scene he would work himself up into a frenzy in the wings, brandishing a heavy ladder until he was panting with exertion, and then rush down the stage, pallid and perspiring, the incarnation of mortified rage.

As a manager, Macready was less successful. Having lost heavily at Covent Garden he tried his luck at Drury Lane with a star cast including Phelps, Keeley, Harley, Mrs. Nisbett, Mrs. Stirling and Priscilla Horton, but failed to pay his way with legitimate drama. In despair he tried opera, in the spring of 1843, but was obliged to close down, overwhelmed and ruined by the enormous overhead charges of the theatre and the countless deadhead seats which he was obliged to concede to shareholders and their friends. He went to America for three years and on returning to London acted at the Princess's and the Haymarket until, on the 26th of February 1851, he made his farewell to the stage, as Macbeth, at Drury Lane. The remaining years of his life were spent in retirement, with occasional recitations at Charity bazaars and the like. The greatest actor of his day, he was justified in the claim he made in his farewell address that he had brought back the Shakespearean text to its original purity and had helped to make the theatre a place where respectable people might be seen to enter.

After Macready's failure at the Lane, Bunn took command again and inaugurated a series of operas, ballets and panto-

mimes—interspersed with legitimate drama under Charles Kean—which turned the theatre into little more than an opera house. “The Bohemian Girl” and others of Balfe’s operas, Wallace’s “Maritana,” with Sims Reeves in the cast; Benedict’s “Brides of Venice,” were followed by a French Circus and that again by more music; but the house did not pay, and by 1849 Bunn was ruined, a fate which likewise befell his successor, James Anderson. In the year of the Great Exhibition an American Circus filled the treasury for a short time, but it was succeeded by yet another series of disasters, varied only by the success of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” in 1852. More opera followed: stalls, 4s.; dress circle, 2s. 6d.; pit, 1s.; gallery, 6d.—then conjurers and circuses, then ruin once more. In 1863 Falconer and Chatterton took the place over with a revival of Shakespeare and old comedies, acted by a company including Phelps, Helen Faucit and Adelaide Neilson, but by 1868 Shakespeare had to give way to “The Great City,” the first of the melodramas with which the Lane was henceforth to be associated. The real horse and cab which appeared on the stage in that play were considered the last thing in stage realism.

Covent Garden was in no better plight than Drury Lane. Charles Kemble had undertaken the management in 1823—Charles Kemble, younger brother of John Philip and of Mrs. Siddons, last of the Kemble trio and one of the great Shakespearean actors of his time. Bailiffs were soon in possession for the King’s taxes, and had it not been for the sudden and unexpected success of his daughter Fanny, as Juliet, in 1829, he would have been utterly ruined. Her success tided Kemble over the bad time, and in 1832 La Porte, the impresario, took over the theatre. In May of the same year Charles Young—who for twenty-five years had held his own on the London stage against John Philip Kemble, Edmund Kean and Cooke—played his farewell, in the character of Hamlet.

A year later, March the 23rd, 1833, Covent Garden witnessed yet another farewell, that of Edmund Kean. It was the first time that he and his son, Charles, had been billed to act together on the London stage; the son was playing Iago to his father’s Othello and the house was crammed to its utmost extent. As the play opened all perceived the ruin which drink had already wreaked in the older man’s health

and ability. He dragged himself wearily through the part until at last they came to the farewell scene, with its singularly appropriate words, "Othello's occupation's gone!" Even as he was speaking, Death laid his hand on Edmund Kean. He began to gasp painfully and finally sank upon his son's shoulder, moaning, "I'm dying—speak to them for me." The curtain was rung down on him hurriedly—and for ever. He died a few weeks later at Richmond. "A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse," he cried, leaping out of bed, an hour before the end, and he expired murmuring the dying words of Octavian, in Colman's play, "The Mountaineers": "Farewell—Flo—Floranthé."

Later in the same year Alfred Bunn, already lessee of Drury Lane, took over Covent Garden; to be followed in a couple of years by Osbaldistone, who, in 1836, introduced to the public the incomparable Helen Faucit. "Then suddenly—oh, heavens, what a revelation of beauty!—forth stepped, walking in brightness, the most faultless of Grecian marbles, Miss Helen Faucit, as Antigone. What perfection of Athenian sculpture—the noble figure, the lovely arms, the fluent drapery! What an unveiling of the statuesque! Perfect she is in form, perfect in attitude." Thus De Quincey. As Macready's leading lady Miss Faucit achieved a remarkable success and helped to make some of Lytton's plays. She married Sir Theodore Martin in 1851 and retired from the stage.

In 1837 Macready returned to the management of Covent Garden with a splendid revival of "The Winter's Tale." He had a star cast including Phelps, Harley, Miss Faucit and Miss Taylor, and during his season produced Shakespearean tragedies, several comedies, Lytton's "Lady of Lyons" and "Richelieu." For a couple of years all went well, but, as usual, the overhead expenses made the theatre a ruinous white elephant, and in July 1839, Macready retired from the struggle, having lost most of his fortune.

Madame Vestris thought to stem the tide of ruin and for several years tried her utmost to make the place a success. After many failures Boucicault's "London Assurance," produced in 1841, seemed to promise that the corner was turned, and there was every sign that the longed-for prosperity was fairly in sight, when the proprietors of the house, whose



Madame Vestris as the Buy-a-Broom girl
in one of her early successful parts



Charles Kean, in the character of
Richard the Second

*(Reproduced by courtesy of Messrs Macmillan & Co.
from The Drama of Yesterday and To-day)*



A scene from the Adelphi version of *Nicholas Nickleby*. Left to right: O. Smith as
Newman Noggs; Mrs Keeley as Smike; Webster as Nicholas

A GLIMPSE AT SOME STAGE FAVOURITES

greed had already made them the bane of every manager in the past, summarily ejected Madame Vestris for being short in her payment of a few hundred pounds out of a rental of nearly £7000 ! For some years the house was let to Jullien for his promenade concerts, and in 1847 it was transmogrified into the Royal Italian Opera House, at a cost of £40,000.

In outward appearance the Haymarket has changed but little during the last hundred years ; Colman's old theatre having been replaced in 1820 by the present building, opened under Morriss's management with "The Rivals." Charles Kemble, Liston, Elliston, Madame Vestris, and many other stars acted there during the decade that followed. For many years the same plays were repeated again and again, and the public never wearied of William Farren as Sir Peter Teazle, never ceased to rock with laughter at Liston or Reeve, nor had its fill of Madame Vestris, Mrs. Honey or Mrs. Waylett. Besides, was there not always Buckstone ? Lytton's "Money," Jerrold's "Time works Wonders," Marston's "Heart of the World," Sheridan Knowles's "Love Chase," all these and many others held their places steadily during the management of Webster from 1837 to 1853. It was at the Haymarket that Macready closed his stage career as Macbeth in 1851.

Webster was succeeded by J. B. Buckstone, one of the greatest low comedians the English stage has ever seen. He was always beloved by the London audiences, who had but to catch one of his sly winks or see the twist in his mobile mouth to burst into a roar of laughter that made the lustre chandeliers tremble. As a playwright and manager he was equally successful, his first season lasting for five years. His farces at half-price seats, starting at midnight in order to catch the audience from Her Majesty's Opera House across the street, were immensely popular and for some years formed a feature of the London season.

But all previous successes were put in the shade by the unexpected popularity of Edward Sothorn, as Lord Dundreary, in 1861. The play was Tom Taylor's "American Cousin," which had fallen rather flat until Sothorn created a part which the author had made but of minor importance. Seated at a table, immaculately dressed and caressing the long whiskers which he immortalised, Lord Dundreary would make the house rock with laughter as he read the letter from

his brother Sam in America: "I don't know any fella in America except Sam; of course I know Sam, because Sam's my brother. Every fella knows his own brother. Sam and I used to be boys when we were lads, both of us. We were always together. People use to say, 'Birds of a Feather'—what is it birds of a feather do? Oh, birds of a feather gather no moss! That's ridiculous, that is! The idea of a lot of birds picking up moss! Oh, no, it's the early bird that knows its own father. That's worse than the other. No bird can know its own father. If he told the truth, he'd say he was even in a fog about his own mother. I've got it, it's the wise child that gets the worms! Oh, that's worse than any of them. No parent would allow his child to get a lot of worms like that! Besides the whole proverb's nonsense from beginning to end. Birds of a feather flock together; yes, that's it. As if a whole flock of birds would have only one feather. They'd all catch cold. Besides, there's only one of those birds could have that feather, and that fella would fly all on one side. Besides, fancy any bird being such a damned fool as to go into a corner and flock all by himself," and so on. The success of Dundreary was immense, and during the next decade Sothorn practically eclipsed Buckstone, who gradually sank into oblivion, though he was still in management when W. S. Gilbert's first plays were produced.

The Olympic Theatre stood in Wych Street, now submerged beneath the grandeurs of Aldwych and Strand "improvements." It was built by Philip Astley from the timbers of an old French man-o'-war; the yards and bowsprits forming the supports and stays, while the deck timber was employed for the walls, stage and flooring. The roof was of tin. Originally intended as a sort of circus, it soon became a home for pantomimes, ballets and dramas, was managed for a while by Elliston, and eventually was taken over by Madame Vestris in 1831. She soon began to put on excellent pieces, acted by a galaxy of stars, including Keeley, Liston, Bland, Frank Mathews and herself. It was there that she revolutionised a branch of stage tradition by insisting on correct costume and real effects. As her husband, Charles Mathews, wrote: "Drawing-rooms were for the first time fitted up like drawing-rooms and fitted with care and taste. Two chairs no longer indicated that two persons were to be

seated. A claret-coloured coat, salmon-coloured trousers, with a broad, black stripe, a sky-blue neckcloth with a large paste brooch, and a cut-steel eyeglass with a pink ribbon, no longer marked the light-comedy gentleman, and the public at once recognised and appreciated these changes."

Madame Vestris, grand-daughter of Bartolozzi the engraver, and widow of the famous French ballet dancer, Armand Vestris, made a name for herself as a contralto in ballad singing at Vauxhall and elsewhere before she took to the legitimate stage. A beautiful and charming woman, whose gallantries and extravagance made her the talk of the town, she was enormously popular on the stage, although not a particularly brilliant actress. But she had a fascinating way that won affection and enthusiasm from every audience, and a charm in acting that made up for any technical deficiencies in her art. She married Charles Mathews while she was managing the Olympic and shortly afterwards started on a tour with him to America, but they were so disgusted with the reception they met with in New York that they abandoned their plans and returned almost immediately. Eliza Vestris's extravagance practically ruined Mathews. She thought nothing of using up a whole boxful of white kid gloves in one evening, throwing away one pair after another if they became in the slightest degree creased while being put on; on one occasion she cut up a three hundred guinea shawl to make a turban. Even when bankruptcy was imminent "the butter on her breakfast table had to be trimmed with roses as early as the month of March, and throughout the winter her home was scented from attic to basement with violets." Before her marriage much of this luxury had been provided for by her many noble and wealthy lovers, one of whom, Lord Fife, wrote :

"Forget me not, Eliza dear,
Though false thou art and insincere;
Thy *costly* charms I'll ne'er forget,
Reminded by a load of debt."

Charles Mathews, a perfect artist in his personification of the blasé impudent youth, was the son of another famous Charles, and in the mid '30s took London by storm with his

airy, easy gaiety. Admirable in characters of the Charles Surface type, he was brilliant only in light comedy, and had no equal as an easy-going, languorous, elegant young man.

Mathews and Vestris went to Covent Garden in 1839 and the Olympic passed through various hands until Gustavus Brooke made his London debut there as Othello in 1846. He had already gained some reputation in the provinces, but his sudden success in London was phenomenal and he would undoubtedly have established himself in permanent favour had he not fallen a victim to drink. He was on his way to Australia aboard the *London* when she sank in 1866 and Brooke was last seen working at the pumps.

In 1849 the original Olympic—or the “Pic” as it was universally called—was burned to the ground. The new theatre erected on its site opened in gloom and was soon a failure. In 1850 William Farren vainly attempted to make a success of it but after three years he handed over the management to Alfred Wigan, who opened with “The Camp at the Olympic,” with Mrs. Stirling and Frederick Robson in the cast. It was Robson—until then but little heard of—who saved Wigan from ruin. A ridiculous farce called the “Wandering Minstrel” gave the comedian his chance, and in the character of Jem Baggs he made an extraordinary and incomprehensible hit with the old song of “Vilikins and his Dinah.” London went mad about it. From drawing-room to scullery, from Buckingham Palace to St. Giles, everyone was singing or whistling “Too-roo-lal, too-roo-la, too-ralli-da!”

Then followed a series of burlesques which made the Olympic the most fashionable theatre in London, so that night after night Wych Street, Drury Lane and Newcastle Street were jammed with carriages. Robson succeeded Wigan in the management in 1857 and for five years enjoyed a huge popularity. Then his brain began to give way, he lost his nerve, and the man who had held his houses spellbound, shrieking with laughter at his jokes or awe-struck at his sudden bursts of pathos, grew too terrified to go before the footlights and shrank back in the wings, whining, “I dare not go on! I dare not go on!” until the prompter had to push him bodily into the centre of the stage. Robson never played the part written for him in “The Ticket of Leave Man,”

which attained such success in 1862 ; he died, in fact, before the play came to an end.

In 1864 Horace Wigan took over the Olympic and during his management introduced Miss Kate Terry. He produced some good melodramas and after five years was succeeded by Liston, who made a success with several dramatised versions of Dickens's novels.

The first Lyceum, built in 1816 and named the English Opera House, was burned down in 1830, and the new building was opened four years later under the name of the New Theatre Royal, Lyceum and English Opera House. Owing to some curious muddle in the plans no stairs to reach the gallery were put in, and it was not until the new building was finished that the omission was noticed ! Until long afterwards a flight of makeshift wooden steps was the only means of access to the gallery

As an opera house the Lyceum failed, and in 1842 it became "An American Amphitheatre," with Nano the Human Fly crawling upon the ceiling or walking up the walls. Advantage was taken of the new licensing laws, in January 1844, to extend the scope of the house and it was rechristened the Theatre Royal Lyceum, opening with Shakespeare's "Henry IV." Later in the year the Keeleys assumed the management and made a great success with dramatised novels of Dickens. The best of these was "Martin Chuzzlewit," with Sam Emery as Jonas ; Alfred Wigan as Montague Tigg ; Frank Mathews as Pecksniff ; and Keeley, himself, as Mrs. Gamp.

Three years later the Keeleys gave place to Madame Vestris, with a star company, including her husband and those inimitable comedians, Harley and Buckstone. They produced a series of successes, among which was the immortal "Box and Cox," played by Harley, Buckstone and Mrs. Macnamara. Yet, despite crowded houses, the theatre did not pay, for Mathews was heavily in debt and his wife's extravagance crippled him in every direction ; so Dillon took over the theatre and made a hit with the "Three Musketeers," though he is, perhaps, better known for having introduced Miss Marie Wilton (Lady Bancroft) to the London stage. Various managements followed until, in 1863, Charles Fechter went to the Lyceum and introduced a new cra. He revolutionised

the whole art of producing theatrical effects, introduced a vivid realism and replaced old stage conventions with startling innovations which aroused much controversy; when he began to take Shakespearean rôles and introduce such novelties as Hamlet in a yellow flaxen wig, speaking with a strong French accent, many who remembered Kean and Macready were alarmed or disgusted.

The Adelphi had been in existence some twenty years when, in 1825, it came under the management of Terry and Yates of Drury Lane. It was already a popular theatre, having had an enormous success with "Tom and Jerry," and the two new managers began well with an excellent company. But Terry died in 1829 and was replaced by Charles Mathews, senior. It was at the Adelphi that some of Dickens's novels, adapted by Stirling, so mercilessly pilloried in *Nicholas Nickleby* (*Chap.* 48), were produced with moderate success. Soon afterwards the famous Adelphi dramas came into being—romantic, amusing, picturesque, sentimental and commanding a popularity that lasted for many years. They started with Buckstone's "Wreck Ashore," but reached their climax when Madame Celeste made the fortune of "St. Mary's Eve." Those old Adelphi dramas were superbly acted with a peculiar realism. In one of them O. Smith, the tragedian, in the part of a drunkard, overturned his glass in a maudlin frenzy. In an instant, with a terrible, almost bestial, cry, he threw himself on the ground and began licking up the last drop of the spilled brandy with a gruesome avidity that made the house shudder.

Edward Wright, perhaps the finest comedian of his time, was for years associated with the Adelphi. Whenever Wright came on the stage the house would begin to rock with laughter, and not only the audience, but the actors themselves, who were often so discomposed by his unexpected gagging that they were unable to speak their lines. With him was Paul Bedford, the favourite of the gods, whose oft-repeated "I believe you, my bo-o-oy," in "The Green Bushes," was a universal catch-phrase for some years. Bedford was a big man with a deep bass voice and an almost preternatural solemnity of manner and appearance, which made his rôle of butt to Wright—and later to Toole—all the more ridiculous. Authors wrote mere skeleton parts for Wright and Bedford



From Bourcicault's "School for Scheming." Left to right the actors are Julia Bennett, Selby, Buckstone, Mrs Glover, William Farren



Charles Mathews in his typical role of roué, in "Used Up"



William Farren and Webster in "Look before you Leap"
SCENES FROM SUCCESSFUL HAYMARKET COMEDIES

who took little notice of even such flimsy help, relying entirely on their own gagging from beginning to end of the piece.

In 1844, Madame Celeste and Benjamin Webster took over the Adelphi and for years it was the scene of some of Webster's best acting. The old place was pulled down in 1858 and the new house opened with the "Colleen Bawn," which had an immense success, though of the old company only Bedford, Webster and Madame Celeste remained. Toole was the rising star and soon brought full houses to the scene of Wright's former triumphs.

The St. James's Theatre was built in 1835 by Braham, the singer, who opened with "Agnes Soral," a work which met with but a cold reception. The following Spring saw the beginning of the series of French plays with which the St. James's was associated for many years, while in the autumn the first of Dickens's pieces, "The Strange Gentleman," was produced. This was followed by others of his farces interspersed with older plays; but the theatre was not a success, despite the attraction of Braham's superb singing, of Mrs. Honey's acting and the fooling of Edward Wright, who made his appearance there in 1837; and after a number of failures the inevitable menagerie appeared under the title of "The Forest of Wild Animals." All this time, however, the French company held their season during May and June of each year. With his showman's gift, Bunn, who had taken over the management, seized the occasion of the Queen's marriage to open a German opera at the theatre, and though performers, musicians and music were almost too bad for criticism, the furore of the public for everything that was German kept the house full for a few months.

In 1842, Mitchell, the Bond Street bookseller, became lessee of the St. James's and devoted it mostly to French pieces. It was there that Rachel made her name—Rachel, the Bernhardt of her time, whom Royalty courted and flattered until the details of her private life became common knowledge. After Mitchell's reign the St. James's passed through many hands and made many failures, relieved only by such successes as Miss Braddon's "Lady Audley's Secret" and "The Poor Nobleman."

Rather more fortunate than the St. James's was the Prin-

cess's Theatre, which stood on the north side of Oxford Street, some 300 yards east of the Circus. Opened in 1840, it was at first destined for promenade concerts, but two years later it was adapted for use as a theatre and opened with a series of Italian operas in English. The usual varied career then followed. Balfe's operas alternated with General Tom Thumb and similar attractions, Henry Russell sang "I'm Afloat" and other stirring songs, while screaming farces filled out the programmes. In 1844, however, James Wallack made a huge hit in "Don Cesar de Bazan." The next year the Princess's welcomed two Americans, Edwin Forrest and Charlotte Cushman. Forrest received such a chilly reception that after a time he went back to America, mortified and revengeful, but Miss Cushman became an immediate favourite and performed superbly in Shakespearean parts though, perhaps, her greatest rôle was that of Meg Merrilies. She paid several other visits to England before her final retirement in 1861.

The Princess's rose to the zenith of its fame in 1850 when the management was undertaken by Charles Kean and Robert Keeley. Kean was at the prime of his career and, at a time when theatres were more or less unfashionable, forced society to come and witness his masterly performance of "The Corsican Brothers." By his clever acting he overcame the embarrassment of a small and insignificant figure, and forged his way to recognition and fame. His revival of Shakespeare even aroused a mild flutter in the Royal circle and he was several times summoned to Windsor to give court performances. Shakespeare and other good plays only occupied three nights each week, ordinary drama was played at other times. It was as Hamlet that Kean made his greatest hit. Nothing like his presentation had ever been known, and in his masterful rendering of the part the curious nasal intonation for which he was so often ridiculed passed almost unnoticed. Another of his great parts was Louis the Eleventh. With him was his wife, formerly famous to theatre-goers as Ellen Tree, herself a superb actress.

Kean's tenancy of the Princess's was the zenith of his and the theatre's fame. On his retirement in 1859 the management was taken over by Augustus Harris, senior, who, the following year, introduced Charles Fechter to the British

public. The Princess's eventually became the home of sensational drama, such as "The Huguenot Captain," "The Streets of London," "Arrah-na-Pogue" and "It's Never too Late to Mend."

The Strand Theatre (the Aldwych Tube Station now commemorates its site) had passed through strenuous times before Douglas Jerrold became part manager in 1836. He wrote a number of short pieces for it, and after he retired in favour of his brother-in-law, Hammond, it became a home of burlesque. For some years its boards were alternately graced with stars, such as the Keeleys or Mrs. Stirling, and monstrosities like Tom Thumb until, in 1848, William Farren took over the house and produced a fine series of comedies with a yet finer cast, including Mrs. Glover and Mrs. Stirling. After Farren's departure for the Olympic in 1850 the theatre underwent eight years of failure, until W. H. Swanborough took charge and engaged his daughter, who had already made a name at the Haymarket. H. J. Byron's burlesques soon made the little theatre's name and for years brought full houses. "Fra Diavolo," "Faust," and numbers of similar skits on popular favourites kept half London roaring with laughter—laughter in which the actors joined with equal zest and enjoyment.

Miss Kelly's theatre, later known as The Royalty, was opened in 1840, but until the early '60s it was worse than a failure—it was a disaster. In 1861, Mrs. Selby, a well-known actress, opened it as a school of acting at which in 1865, Julia Neilson made her debut. The following year it was given over to burlesques of which the parody of the "Bohemian Girl" was the best.

The theatre in Tottenham Street had passed under various names before Mrs. Nisbett leased it in 1831 and rechristened it the Queen's. She had a good stock company and introduced Madame Celeste, then but fifteen years of age, to a London audience. The lovely Nisbett departed some six years later and after a brief season under Madame Vestris's management, the theatre became the home of the worst type of melodrama. It was commonly known as the Dust Hole and the lowest of audiences was attracted by the lowest of prices, ranging from 1s. 6d. to 4d. with half-prices for the pit! "The Lure of Death or The Dog Witness;" "Footpad

Joe, the Terror of Charing Cross," were typical *pièces de résistance* and the acting was on a par—terrific beetle-browed villains, more terrific heroes and blood galore.

Marie Wilton, undaunted by the smell of fried fish and orange-peel which no art could banish, took over the theatre in 1865 and shortly afterwards began the great Robertson era with "Society," a play which brought all London to the old Dust Hole.

Burlesques and extravaganzas—types of plays now practically unknown—had an immense vogue in early Victorian days. A burlesque was essentially a play in which the audience laughed at themselves. The sentiment, melodrama and enthusiasm to which all classes were so susceptible were held up to ridicule by means of exaggeration and bathos. On the stage this took the form, mainly, of skits upon popular stories and favourite plays such as the legends of Faust, Dido, Robin Hood and even the plays of Shakespeare. Everything was ridiculed—everything was reversed and inverted—men acted as women, women as men—and no feelings were spared. The plays were written in pun-bestrewn verse interspersed with songs. Palgrave Simpson, Burnand of *Punch*, W. Brough and H. J. Byron were the apostles of the art of burlesque writing, and very remarkable and clever bosh they turned out!

The extravaganza, equally popular and far less bitter, was really nothing more than a glorified whimsicality. It was usually based on some fairy legend; a deal of ballet dancing was worked into it and the whole invariably ended with a grand transformation scene. Planché was the king of extravaganza creators and produced some really wonderful pieces, delightful spectacles of fairies and beautiful tales from mythology.

The Christmas pantomime was an old institution and varied but little—Clown, Harlequin, Columbine, Pantaloon, were favourites the public demanded and expected to see. In most theatres the pantomime followed the usual play and did not form the sole performance of the evening. Taking, for example, the Boxing Night of 1848, at Drury Lane, the evening was opened with Balfe's opera "The Maid of Honour"; this was followed by "Friar Rush, or Harlequin and King Gold," produced to a house crammed to the ceiling.

A description of this will serve for all pantomimes of the time :

The Baron Catzenellenbogencrassenheim falls in love with the beautiful Hilda, the daughter of an old wood-cutter. She is beloved by Fritz, and the good fairies of course take up the cause of the young people. The Baron, being in distressed circumstances, applies to King Gold for his assistance. He gives it, and wealth is about to triumph, when Friar Rush, instigated by the fairies, summons an army of ignes fatui about him, and by deluding apparitions, leads the Baron and the Henchman through swamps alive with frogs and snipes, and other horrors of gigantic size, until they sink exhausted into the morass. Meantime, King Gold has caught the lovers, and is about to hand them over to the mercies of the Baron, who falls right through the earth to the Golden Monarch's caverns, when the good Fairy appears, and changes Fritz and Hilda to Harlequin and Columbine ; and the Baron and his Henchman become Pantaloon and Clown. The comic business then commences, with a country public-house, in which the indestructibility of Harlequin is famously shown. He is crammed down a pump, pumped out into a pail, rolled flat, fired out of a cannon, decapitated, has his head thrown into the pit, and otherwise marvellously ill-treated, but always comes up entire again. Next, we have a lively view of Boulogne, on the quay with the hotel "touters," douaniers and visitors, all bustle and activity. The Clown here makes a great business of examining the travellers : Punch is well received, but put back upon the discovery that he has a caricature of Louis Philippe in his portfolio ; and, finally, a luckless traveller is pulled to pieces by the hotel people. Then, the Egyptian Hall turns out its curiosities in a general polka : after this, a bedroom scene is introduced for the Clown and Pantaloon, whose beds turn into two fishing-boats, and the room into the open sea. A fishmonger's shop and music publisher's afford room for some of the Clown's oyster-eating and pilfering, and some hits at the Jenny Lind mania. After this, the ascent of the Vauxhall balloons brings all the characters to the abode of the stars, and the curtain falls upon a tableau of revolving coloured fires.

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This very brief, and to me, at least, unsatisfying glimpse

of the theatres, would be incomplete without something about a few of those whose names have been mentioned.

Miss Ellen Tree, later the wife of Charles Kean, was a very beautiful and gifted young actress who was long a favourite. She had a great insight into the leading parts assigned to her and, in her prime, had few equals as Lady Macbeth. Her range was large, and her audiences, captivated by the beauty of her face, were carried away alike by her gay and care-free mirth or her tenderness and self-devotion. Another of the earlier favourites was Mrs. Waylett, who sang or acted equally well in the comediettas of the '30s. Mrs. Honey, pretty and coquettish, was already somewhat past her prime, but Mrs. Yates, who was also growing elderly, retained her skill, evinced in quiet yet convincing acting, until the last.

O. Smith, of the Adelphi, was a veritable and typical villain, making his hearers tremble to the soles of their feet with the concentrated anger, denunciation or bitterness of his speeches. Vandenhoff, a more tragic villain, was famous for his Iago and Macbeth. William Farren, one of the greatest of Sir Peter Teazles, was a remarkable comedian, who was invariably cast for old men's parts, which he played with success from the age of eighteen until his retirement. His Lord Ogleby in "The Clandestine Marriage" was an exquisite piece of acting and in itself placed Farren high in the ranks of his contemporaries.

Mrs. Glover was a successful Mrs. Malaprop and played brilliantly the Nurse in "Romeo and Juliet," Gertrude in "Hamlet" and Mrs. Heidelberg in "The Clandestine Marriage." Mrs. Warner, delightful as Hermione in "The Winter's Tale," made a success as Lady Macbeth to Macready and Phelps. Mrs. Nisbett, beautiful, tall and dark, was at one time a rival of Madame Vestris for popular favour. Sprightly, coquettish and with an infectious humour, she was loved by all who saw her and though she retired comparatively early, she was long remembered by an adoring public.

Very famous in their day were the Keeleys. Robert, small, hook-nosed, inexpressibly droll in a quiet, refined way, was loved by all audiences during his long career and made a success of the various theatres he managed at different times. Mrs. Keeley had made a great hit as Jack Shepherd

in 1839 when her song, to which Paul Bedford contributed a rolling bass, fairly took the town by storm :

“ In a box of the ‘ stone-jug ’ I was born,
Of a hempen widow, the kid forlorn,
Fake away !
And my noble father, as I’ve heard say,
Was a famous merchant of capers gay.
Nix my dolly, pals, fake away !
Nix my dolly, pals, fake away ! ”

She was a charming and clever “ principal boy ” and was long associated with the companies of Macready and Charles Kean. Her two great parts were Nerissa in “ The Last Days of Pompeii ” and SMIKE in “ Nicholas Nickleby.”

Among comedians J. P. Harley long occupied a prominent position. Airy, chattering, brimming over with fun—inimitable as Sir Benjamin Backbite or as Bob Acres—he was for many years the idol of all farce lovers and, if for no other reason, should remain for ever famous as the original Cox to Buckstone’s Box. He was in the cast of several of Boz’s early plays.

John Liston, who made his London debut in 1805, was an admirable comedian with a quiet, ludicrous gravity that never failed in its point. Neither smile nor twinkle would accompany the drollest of his patter nor would he acknowledge the roars of laughter and applause that greeted his jokes. His masterpiece was the personification of Paul Pry, though he also made great hits as Slender, Sir Andrew Aguecheck and Bottom.

Mrs. Stirling first appeared on the stage in 1827 but did not come to London until 1836. Six years later she joined Macready at Drury Lane and made a great success as Celia in “ As You Like It.” Her greatest triumph, however, was in 1852 as Peg Woffington in “ Masks and Faces ” at the Haymarket, where she played to Webster. Later she was unexcelled as Mrs. Malaprop and the Nurse in “ Romeo and Juliet.”

Marie Wilton, better known in later days as Mrs., or Lady, Bancroft, made her London debut at the Lyceum in 1856, though she had been on the provincial boards since the age of six. She immediately won success in burlesques and nine years later began management, with considerable success.

As many will still remember, she was a superb comedian and has seldom been surpassed as Lady Teazle.

The Royal Opera House, now called His Majesty's Theatre, saw a golden age between 1820 and 1850 when the decay of the legitimate drama or rather public distaste for it, aroused increasing zest for music.

Giuditta Pasta, for whom "Norma" and "La Sonnambula" had been especially written, thrilled London with her wonderful combination of perfect voice and perfect acting; Madame Sontag, one of the most wonderful Rosinas the stage has ever seen, was in the height of her popularity. Madame Malibran, a contralto with a phenomenal compass, had conquered London in 1825 and rivalled Sontag in her popularity during the ten years that preceded her premature death at twenty-eight.

It was in 1830 that Luigi Lablache appeared, his tremendous bass making the very walls of the theatre tremble. Almost grotesquely huge in build, the delicacy and artistry of his genius made all physical defects forgotten. The following year came Rubini, the tenor who could start on the high B flat and keep there for some time, who broke his collar-bone by the sheer force of inflating his lungs and who eventually bought himself a duchy in Italy whither he retired, in 1845, a multi-millionaire—in francs.

Antonio Tamburini, the rival of Lablache as a powerful bass, came in 1823 and two years later the divine Giulia Grisi, the soprano for whom Bellini wrote "I Puritani." Fanny Persiani made her London debut in the season of 1837-38, to keep her audiences spell-bound for another ten years; and was followed by Giuseppe Mario, the greatest tenor of his time, whose name in his prime was a household word. It was the great day of opera, a day which could produce the famous "Puritani" quartette with Rubini, Tamburini, Lablache and Giulia Grisi!

Scarcely inferior to these, according to English critics, was Adelaide Kemble, daughter of Charles, who appeared in 1842 and made an immediate success in "Norma," as much by her acting as by her singing.

Many of these singers had appeared at Her Majesty's

under the auspices of La Porte, one of the best impresarios that theatre ever had. In 1840, staggered at the enormous sums demanded by these stars, he engaged a mediocre bass named Colletti to take the place of Tamburini. Artistes and audience alike resented the substitution. On the first night nothing could be heard from boxes and stalls but shouts of "Tamburini": some of the audience even stormed the stage and La Porte was defeated, as narrated graphically by Ingoldsby in "A Row in an Omnibus (Box)"—

"And grant that there never again may be
Such a hulliballoo as we've happened to see
About nothing on earth but Fiddle-de-dee."

On La Porte's death in 1842 he was succeeded by Lumley who began his first season with the introduction of Giorgio Ronconi, a fine actor though only second-rate as a baritone. In 1845 Verdi's "Ernani" was produced, the first of that composer's works to be heard in London. It was badly received by public and critics alike, none realising the enormous vogue the composer would have in a few years.

Lumley and his artistes, however, quarrelled in 1846 when Grisi, Mario and Tamburini, under the leadership of Michael Costa the conductor, left Her Majesty's and opened at Covent Garden, leaving only Lablache at the old theatre. This meant ruin for both parties, for there was not room in London for two opera houses, and Lumley would have had to close his doors had he not succeeded in persuading Jenny Lind to cancel the engagement she had made with Bunn to make her first appearance in England at Drury Lane. According to *Punch* and alluding to Bunn's varied programmes:

"But Jenny Lind, whose wakened sight
Saw Drury in a proper light,
Refused for any sum per night
To sing at the Menagerie."

Anyhow, she broke with Bunn, and made her debut at Her Majesty's on Tuesday night, May the 4th, 1847, as Alice in "Roberto il Diavolo." She cost Lumley £2500 in damages he had to pay Bunn, but she filled the house. Never had such a crowd been seen! The Haymarket was impassable six hours before the doors were opened and the first of the "Jenny

Lind crushes " showed what enthusiastic audiences London could produce.

The Queen and Prince Consort even went to hear her two nights running and Her Majesty was so delighted with the Diva's exquisite singing, that she threw her a magnificent bouquet. Never was there such a furore, before nor since, as this slight girl occasioned. Nothing else was talked of, nothing else was thought of, from London to the most distant villages of England.

Her premature retirement from the stage in 1849 was a blow from which Lumley never recovered. For a few years he carried on with Sontag and the newly discovered tenor Sims Reeves, but in 1852 he was obliged to close down and make his way to the Bankruptcy Court.

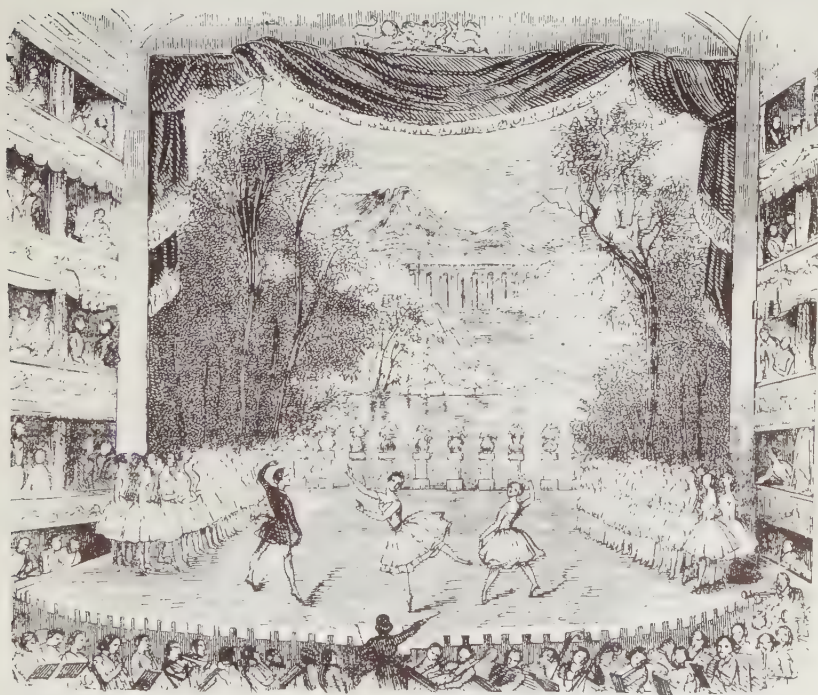
The burning of Covent Garden in 1856, however, gave Her Majesty's a new chance; Lumley resumed the reins of management and reopened with the delightful, graceful and exquisite Maria Piccolomini. Two years later he produced Teresa Titiens who, assisted by Giuglini, the powerful tenor who had recently joined Lumley, filled the house nightly to overflowing. With this success Lumley retired, being succeeded by the eccentric E. T. Smith who, in a short time, gave place to J. H. Mapleson, an impresario who proved eminently capable in his management. In 1863 he produced Gounod's "Faust" and was making a big success with other pieces when the theatre was burned to the ground in 1867. Just before the catastrophe Mapleson had introduced Christine Nielsson whose rendering of Marguerite was a masterpiece.

It was during the pantomime season of 1866 that the famous production of "Oonagh" took place. The house opened on the Saturday evening with this new piece; hours passed and still the play went on, though, to use a Victorian pun, most of the audience went off; midnight sounded—one o'clock, and still "Oonagh" was in full swing. At two A.M. the carpenters took the matter into their own hands and pulled the carpet back with a sudden jerk. All the actors were thrown to the floor and the curtain was rung down for the first and last time on "Oonagh."

The ballet had long been a favourite feature of the opera season but it was not until Maria Taglioni and Fanny Elssler came to London that the true possibilities of dancing were



The famous Pas de Quatre, by Taglioni, Gristi, Lucille Grahn, and Cerito,
performed in July 1845



The ballet of *L'Elève de l'Amour*, in which Perrot and Cerito scored a
great success in June 1842

SUCCESSES OF THE BALLET AT HER MAJESTY'S

appreciated. Chaste and exquisite in every motion, Taglioni by her very sweetness revealed herself as the embodiment of poetry and grace. Fanny Elssler, though less a general favourite, was probably a better dancer in that she combined with her dancing the genius of an actress. But it was Taglioni who caught the popular affection—who became a rage and as was the fashion, gave her name to countless objects of as diverse natures as omnibuses, ice-creams and overcoats. Her great success was in “*La Sylphide*,” written expressly for her, and it was as *La Sylphide* that she will pass down to posterity.

Taglioni and Fanny Elssler were followed by the lovely Cerito, graceful Adèle Dumilâtre and the perfectly delightful Carlotta Grisi, cousin of Giulia. In those glorious days Fop’s Alley, as the gangway from the pit to the orchestra was called, was crowded with youths and old men, all fascinated with the wonders of the ballet. A good many shared the opinion of that Viscount friend of Mr. Pip: “Do I go to the theatre to be lectured? No, Pip. What’s the legitimate object of the drama, Pip? Human nature. What are legs? Human nature. Then let us have plenty of leg pieces, Pip, and I’ll stand by you, my buck!”—(*Chuzzlewit*, 28.)

In 1845 Lucille Grahn danced her way into fame, and that same year Taglioni returned to London after a fairly long absence. Her reappearance gave Lumley the idea of a wonderful *Pas de Quatre* and its execution aroused a passionate interest that spread itself to half Europe. Taglioni, Grisi, Cerito and Lucille Grahn were to dance in it. Grisi, then in Paris, was brought over by special relays of horses between Paris and Calais, a special boat to Dover and a special train thence to London. Innumerable rehearsals took place, innumerable squabbles and difficulties about precedence were patched up and the famous dance was given on a hot night of July. It was the theme of everyone’s conversation, and several ambassadors of foreign courts even sent messengers speeding to the Continent specially burdened with despatches on the subject. A contemporary critic wrote:

“A group more faultless and more replete with grace and poetry than that formed by these *danseuses* has never been seen. Taglioni in the midst, her head thrown backwards,

apparently reclining in the arms of her sister nymphs ! No description can render the exquisite, and almost ethereal grace of movement and attitude of these great dancers, and those who have witnessed the scene may boast of having once at least seen the perfection of the art of dancing so little understood. There was no affectation, no apparent exertion or struggle for effect on the part of these gifted *artistes* ; and though they displayed their utmost resources, there was a simplicity and ease, the absence of which would have completely broken the spell they threw around the scene.

“ Every time a shower of bouquets descended, on the conclusion of a solo pas of one or the other of the fair *ballerine*, her sister dancers came forward to assist her in collecting them ; and both on Saturday and Tuesday did Cerito offer to crown Taglioni with a wreath which had been thrown in homage to the queen of the dance. The applause was universal, and equally distributed. This, however, did not take from the excitement of the scene. The houses, crowded to the roof, presented a concourse of the most eager faces, never diverted for a moment from the performance ; and the extraordinary tumult of enthusiastic applause, joined to the delightful effect of the spectacle presented, imparted to the whole scene an interest and excitement that can hardly be imagined. Such was this effect produced on us by this matchless performance that the lyrical portion of the entertainments have been comparatively disregarded.”

Much of the success of the *Pas de Quatre* was due to Perrot, the ballet-master and *premier danseur*, who so often shared the honours with Carlotta Grisi and Lucille Grahn. It was he who helped the former introduce the Polka and always extracted the best from all his *figurantes*.

With the ballet of *Les Quatre Saisons* in 1848, danced by Carlotta Grisi, Cerito, Taglioni, Rosati and the *danseurs* Perrot and St. Leon, the decline of the art of ballet may be said to have begun. Music occupied the popular taste more and more and as the old *artistes* passed from the boards no others came to take their place.

CHAPTER X

ENTERTAINMENT FOR ALL

Joe Grimaldi—The Circus Ring—Sadler's Wells—The Surrey—The Old Vic.—Minor Theatres—Astley's—Ducrow—Astley's Advertising Pranks—Batty's—Waxworks—Panoramas—The Egyptian Hall—Albert Smith—The Colosseum—Leicester Square—Wyld's Globe—The Chinese Junk—The German Reeds—The Wizard of the North—Jullien—Polkamina.

IT would be a sacrilege to talk of Sadler's Wells Theatre and make no mention of Joe Grimaldi, the king of clowns and one of the best-loved men of his day, although he had cracked his last joke on the boards two years before our period opens. The son of a dentist to Queen Charlotte, who had given up the forceps to take charge of the ballet at the Wells and Drury Lane, Joe began his stage career at the age of three, when he appeared on the boards as a monkey ; thereafter he devoted his life to such hard work as would make any modern Trade Unionist throw up his hands in despair and draw the dole. For months on end he acted at Sadler's Wells and Drury Lane on the same night, having to run from one to the other as fast as he could between the performances, on one occasion doing the journey in thirteen minutes.

Grimaldi's success as a clown reached its climax in the pantomime of "Mother Goose" with which Drury Lane opened on the Boxing Night of 1806. The popularity of this was enormous and year after year it was revived with undiminished success, Joe's classic songs of "Hot Codlins" and "Tippetywitchet" invariably arousing the wildest enthusiasm.

Following a serious illness in 1815, his health gave way and though he continued to keep his audiences in roars of laughter, he was all the time in such agony that supers were stationed in the wings to catch him as he staggered off the stage so doubled up with cramp that his limbs had to be chafed before he could reappear.

All who saw him agreed that there never was such a clown as Grimaldi with his wonderful grimaces, his extraordinary

gestures, his mixture of buffoonery and pathos. In one of his famous songs, "An Oyster Crossed in Love," Joe sat between a codfish and a huge oyster that opened and closed its shell in time with his music, and one who saw the scene when a child, said that half the audience was in tears.

Grimaldi's farewell at Drury Lane lingered long in the memory of those who were present. One scene of "Harlequin Hoax" was given and the old clown had to be carried in a chair on to the stage—that stage upon which he had been wont to burst in leaps and bounds. But crippled as he was, Joe's jokes were as sparkling as ever and the audience were still roaring with laughter when he was carried back before the footlights and waved them to silence for his farewell speech—

"Ladies and Gentlemen: In putting off the clown's garment, allow me to drop also the clown's taciturnity, and address you in a few parting sentences. I entered early on this course of life, and leave it prematurely. Eight and forty years only have passed over my head—but I am going as fast down the hill of life as that older Joe—John Anderson. Like vaulting ambition, I have overleaped myself, and pay the penalty in an advanced old age. If I have now any aptitude for tumbling, it is through bodily infirmity, for I am worse on my feet than I used to be on my head. It is four years since I jumped my last jump—filched my last oyster—boiled my last sausage—and set in for retirement. Not quite so well provided for, I must acknowledge, as in the days of my clownship, for then, I dare say some of you remember, I used to have a fowl in one pocket and sauce for it in another.

"To-night has seen me assume the motley for a short time—it clung to my skin as I took it off, and the old cap and bells rang mournfully as I quitted them for ever."

I have described Grimaldi at such length because he was the model upon which all clowns fashioned themselves and was the king of the old knock-about humour of Richardson's shows and the circus ring of the '30s. "Again we catch a glimpse (too brief, alas!) of the lady with the green parasol in her hand, on the outside stage of the next show but one, who supports herself on one foot, on the back of a majestic horse, blotting-paper coloured and white; and once again our eyes open wide with wonder, and our hearts throb with emotion, as we deliver our cardboard check into the very

hands of the Harlequin himself, who, all glittering with spangles, and dazzling with many colours, deigns to give us a word of encouragement and commendation as we pass into the booth!

“But what was this—even this—to the glories of the inside, where, amid the smell of sawdust, and orange-peel, sweeter far than violets to youthful noses, the first play being over, the lovers united, the ghost appeased, the Baron killed, and everything made comfortable and pleasant, the pantomime itself began! What words can describe the deep gloom of the opening scene, where a crafty magician holding a young lady in bondage is discovered, studying an enchanted book to the soft music of a gong! or in what terms can we express the thrill of ecstasy with which, his magic power opposed by superior art, we beheld the monster himself converted into a Clown! What mattered it that the stage was three yards wide and four deep? *we* never saw it. We had no eyes, ears or corporeal senses, but for the pantomime. And when its short career was run, and the Baron previously slaughtered, coming forward with his hand upon his heart, announced that for that favour Mr. Richardson returned his most sincere thanks, and the performances would commence again in a quarter of an hour, what jest could equal the effects of the Baron’s indignation and surprise, when the Clown, unexpectedly peeping from behind the curtain, requested the audience ‘not to believe it, for it was all gammon!’”—(*Boz.*)

Sadler’s Wells had been giving its patrons very fair programmes of good honest melodrama, mingled with dramatised historical novels and the like, when Samuel Phelps and Mrs. Warner took it over in 1844. Phelps was one of the finest actors of his time, whether as a tragedian or a comedian—a splendid all-round player who could sway his audiences as he willed, delighted with his comedy or shuddering at his tragic outbursts. He had already made a great name at Drury Lane, Covent Garden and the Haymarket, when he conceived the scheme of producing Shakespeare in all its original purity at the Wells.

A Sadler’s Wells’ audience was of the crudest, and accustomed to making itself heard from the galleries. Phelps stopped all this and ejected—sometimes with his own hands—noisy interrupters.

Starting with "Macbeth," during the next few years he produced a wonderful series of revivals in which the Shakespearean text was observed carefully and no efforts spared to ensure accuracy of costume and detail. Phelps did not confine himself to Shakespeare, however, but produced other Elizabethan masterpieces as well as plays by Lytton, Colman, Byron, Leigh Hunt and other moderns.

His success was remarkable. The small theatre, in those days almost suburban, was thronged with what were then called "the lower classes" who revelled in the glories of classic English drama while Society was listening to Italian opera or applauding the efforts of dancing dogs. Phelps, himself, was wonderful. He could rouse an artisan audience to the wildest enthusiasm by his delivery of the oration in "Henry V"; set them thinking by his solemn delivery of "To be, or not to be"; open up to them a new world of ideas by his presentation of Bottom, Justice Shallow or Manfred.

In partnership with Greenwood, Phelps carried on the management of the "Wells" until 1860, when the former retired. Two years later, Phelps himself gave up the task and entered into an engagement at Drury Lane.

After a brief period he was followed at the "Wells" by Edgar whose wife, better known as Miss Marriott and one of the most famous female Hamlets, helped to draw full houses for some years. When their tenancy ceased the "Wells" became a mere barn where prize-fights were held and miscellaneous entertainments staged.

Among smaller theatres the Surrey was probably as popular as any with those who liked melodrama and romance. Originally a circus—it was indeed, the first equestrian theatre to be opened in London—it had passed through many vicissitudes before Elliston's management in 1827. Performing horses, child prodigies, clowns and sentiment, all had been tried in their turn, but the place was something of a white elephant. It was at the Surrey that the famous dog actors had created such a furore in earlier days.

Even Elliston would have failed there had he not, in 1829, been lucky enough to secure Douglas Jerrold's "Black Eyed Susan." Poor as this play is, it caught the public taste and T. P. Cooke's acting of "William" was one of the best things he ever did. According to Hepworth Dixon "all London

went over the water, and Cooke became a personage in society. . . . Covent Garden borrowed the play and engaged the actor for an afterpiece. A hackney cab conveyed the triumphant William in his blue jacket and white trousers from the Obelisk to Bow Street, and Mayfair maidens wept over the stirring situations and laughed over the searching dialogue, which had moved, an hour before, the laughter and tears of the Borough." The play lasted for four hundred nights, Elliston and Cooke made fortunes—Douglas Jerrold made £70.

Characteristic of Elliston and his audiences were the remarkable speeches he was in the habit of making during the performance or after the fall of the curtain. Mr. Bolton Baker records one of these, directed to a rather noisy gallery :

"Ladies and Gentlemen, I venture as a most unobtrusive individual to take the great liberty of addressing you. It is a rare occurrence that I deem it necessary to place myself in juxtaposition with you. (*Noise in the gallery.*) When I said juxtaposition I meant *vis-à-vis*. (*Increased noise.*) When I uttered *vis-à-vis* I meant contactability. Now let me tell you that *vis-à-vis*, which is a French term, and contactability, which is a truly English term, very nearly assimilate to each other. (*Disturbance redoubled.*) Gentlemen, gentlemen, I am really ashamed of your conduct. It is unlike a Surrey audience. Are you aware that I have in this establishment most efficient peace officers at my immediate disposal? Peace officers, gentlemen, mean persons necessary in time of war. A word to the wise! One more word—if that gentleman in the carpenter's cap will sit down (*pointing to him*) the little girl in red ribbons behind him—you, my love, I mean—will be able to see the entertainment."

Elliston died in 1831, and was succeeded by Osbaldistone who made a hit with a terrific murder piece entitled "Jonathan Bradford." Later on, Bunn took over the Surrey and began an opera season which failed, despite the really excellent singers he engaged.

The house was taken over by Shepherd and Creswick in 1848, and under their management stirring domestic, nautical and murder plays followed one another, among them pirated and garbled versions of Dickens's and other popular novels. One night in December 1838, Dickens went to see their version of "Oliver Twist", and found it so hideous a travesty

of his story that in the middle of the first scene he lay down on the floor in a corner of the box and never rose from it until the drop-scene fell.

In 1865 the Surrey Theatre was burned to the ground and the present building was erected on the site, to be the scene of George Conquest's success in later years.

Not far from the Surrey is the Victoria, better known as the "Old Vic." Ever since its name was changed in 1833 from the Coburg, it has enjoyed varied and honourable history; Edmund Kean has acted there; its walls have echoed to the violin of Paganini; Buckstone made his first London appearance on its boards. But none of these things pleased its patrons so much as terrific melodramas and gory tragedies. According to Charles Mathews, "the lower orders rush there in mobs and, in shirt sleeves, applaud frantically, drink ginger-beer, munch apples, crack nuts, call the actors by their Christian names and throw them orange-peel by way of bouquets."

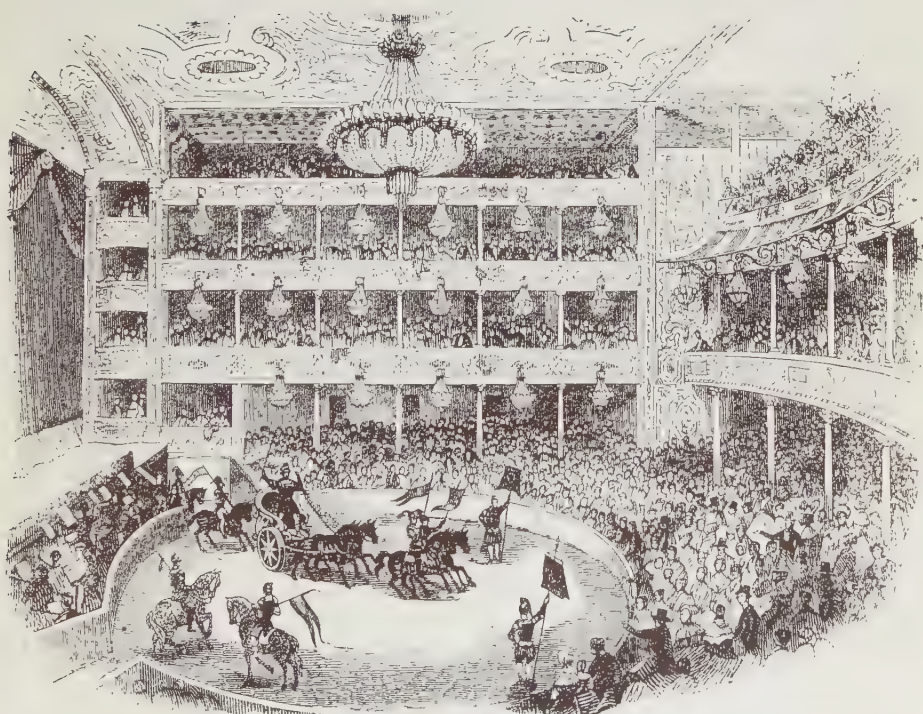
The Bower Saloon, in Stangate, Lambeth, was opened in 1838 for benefit of the New Cut and Lower Marsh populace who revelled equally in "Maria Martin" and "Macbeth," howled at the villains and wept with the heroines of the blood-and-thunder melodramas presented to them.

Several theatres in the East End enjoyed full houses night after night. The old City Theatre, in Milton Street at different times produced plays with Kean, Ellen Tree, Buckstone and Webster in the casts. For some time it was run by Davidge, the manager of the Coburg who transported his company bodily from one theatre to the other in coaches. Mrs. Waylett was the last star to draw a large audience before the house was finally closed in 1836.

Meanwhile a new City Theatre had been opened, in 1835, in Norton Folgate, Whitechapel Road, and for some years it was devoted to the usual melodramas. In 1846 it was taken over by Mrs. Honner, a very brilliant actress who spent most of her career in the East End. She started a series of Shakespearean revivals which drew large houses and also produced a version of "The Battle of Life" in which her Clemency Newcome was a veritable masterpiece of acting. After Mrs. Honner came two showmen, Nelson Lee and Johnson, who reduced the prices and made such a success that they



Combat between Richard and Saladin, from the spectacle of
"The Crusaders of Jerusalem"



Interior of the new amphitheatre built by Batty
EQUESTRIAN DRAMAS AT ASTLEY'S

were able to engage West End companies to produce their tragedies and melodramas. The theatre was closed for ever in 1868.

The Whitechapel Pavilion was a staunch stronghold of melodrama, as also was the Britannia at Hoxton, which had its own style of play, glorifying the virtues of the poor and inveighing against the vices of the idle rich. Dickens described it with some detail in the *Uncommercial Traveller*.

"If there is one place of entertainment sacred to Londoners in particular and Provincials in general that place is Astley's," observed a writer in *Once a Week*. Astley's Royal Amphitheatre stood in Westminster Bridge Road on the site, next to Felix Street, now occupied by a petrol station. It was the great home of trick horse-riding and those wonderful long-forgotten equestrian shows, half drama, half circus; those thrilling plays of blood, thunder and love which invariably ended with great effects such as that witnessed by Mr. George in *Bleak House*: "The Emperor of Tartary gets up into a cart and condescends to bless the united lovers by hovering over them with the Union Jack."

"Dear, dear, what a place it looked, that Astley's; with all the paint, gilding, and looking-glass; the vague smell of horses suggestive of coming wonders; the curtain that hid such gorgeous mysteries; the clean white sawdust down in the circus; the company coming in and taking their places; the fiddlers looking carelessly up at them while they tuned their instruments, as if they didn't want the play to begin, and knew it all beforehand! What a glow was that, which burst upon them all, when that long, clear, brilliant row of lights came slowly up; and what the feverish excitement when the little bell rang and the music began in good earnest, with strong parts for the drums, and sweet effects for the triangles!"—(*Curiosity Shop*, 39.)

As a show Astley's dated from 1774 but the original house and its successor were both burned down, the proprietor's mother-in-law being scorched to death in the second fire, in 1803. Old Philip Astley died in 1814 and his son, an extraordinarily skilful equestrian, who had been rewarded by Marie Antoinette for his graceful performances before the French Court, carried on the place for a few years. The management was then taken over by W. Davis, who scored a huge hit with

“The Blood Red Knight” by which he made over £10,000 and “Waterloo,” in which Napoleon and Wellington met face to face on the battlefield and edified the audience by exchanging noble and virtuous platitudes. Davis was followed by Andrew Ducrow, one of the finest equestrians of his own or any other time. In addition to his skill as a horseman he was an excellent actor of pantomime, though he had the utmost contempt for everything in the shape of dialogue. “Cut the cackle and come to the ’osses” was an adage of his that acquired immortality, and he carried out this principle with the utmost rigour, rightly judging that his audiences, or rather spectators, were far more edified by action than mere rhetoric. So, to everyone’s relief, “the cackle” was cut, and all eyes were opened in breathless wonder as Ducrow dashed round the arena on six horses or fought terrific fights in defence of Virtue and Beauty—also on horseback.

In addition to set pieces there were always some turns of purely trick horsemanship, superintended by Widdecomb, the famous ring-master, while running throughout the whole was the drollery of the clown, cracking jokes and playing pranks that never varied yet never failed to please.

“We defy anyone who has been to Astley’s two or three times, and is consequently capable of appreciating the perseverance with which precisely the same jokes are repeated night after night, and season after season, not to be amused with one part of the performance at least—we mean the scenes in the circle. For ourselves, we know that when the hoop, composed of gas jets, is let down, the curtain drawn up for the convenience of the half-price on their ejection from the ring, the orange-peel cleared away, and the sawdust shaken, with mathematical precision, into a complete circle, we feel as much enlivened as the youngest child present; and actually join in the laugh which follows the clown’s shrill shout of ‘Here we are!’ just for old acquaintance’s sake. Nor can we quite divest ourselves of our old feeling of reverence for the riding-master, who follows the clown with a long whip in his hand, and bows to the audience with graceful dignity. He is none of your second-rate riding-masters in nankeen dressing-gowns, with brown frogs, but the regular gentleman attendant on the principal riders, who always wears a military uniform with a table-cloth inside the breast

of the coat, in which costume he forcibly reminds one of a fowl trussed for roasting. He is—— But why should we attempt to describe that of which no description can convey an adequate idea? Everybody knows the man, and everybody remembers his polished boots, his graceful demeanour, stiff, as some misjudging persons have in their jealousy considered it, and the splendid head of black hair, parted high on the forehead, to impart to the countenance an appearance of deep thought and poetic melancholy. His soft and pleasing voice, too, is in perfect unison with his noble bearing, as he humours the clown by indulging in a little badinage; and the striking recollection of his own dignity with which he exclaims, ‘Now, sir, if you please, inquire for Miss Woolford, sir,’ can never be forgotten. The graceful air, too, with which he introduces Miss Woolford into the arena, and, after assisting her to the saddle, follows her fairy courser round the circle, can never fail to create a deep impression in the bosom of every female servant present.

“When Miss Woolford, and the horse, and the orchestra all stop together to take breath, he urbanely takes part in some such dialogue as the following (commenced by the clown): ‘I say, sir!’—‘Well, sir?’ (it’s always conducted in the politest manner), ‘Did you ever happen to hear I was in the army, sir?’—‘No, sir.’—‘Oh, yes, sir—I can go through my exercises, sir.’—‘Indeed, sir?’—‘Shall I do it now, sir?’—‘If you please, sir; come, sir—make haste’ (a cut with a long whip, and ‘Ha’ done now—I don’t like it!’ from the clown). Here the clown throws himself on the ground and goes through a variety of gymnastic convulsions, doubling himself up, and untying himself again, and making himself look very like a man in the most hopeless extreme of human agony, to the vociferous delight of the gallery, until he is interrupted by a second cut from the long whip, and a request to see ‘what Miss Woolford’s stopping for?’

“On which, to the inexpressible mirth of the gallery, he exclaims, ‘Now, Miss Woolford, what can I come for to go, for to fetch, for to bring, for to carry, for to do for you, ma’am?’ On the lady’s announcing with a sweet smile that she wants the two flags, they are, with sundry grimaces, procured and handed up; the clown facetiously observing, after the performance of the latter ceremony: ‘He, he, ho!’

I say, sir, Miss Woolford knows me; she smiled at me.' Another cut from the whip, a burst from the orchestra, a start from the horse, and round goes Miss Woolford again on her graceful performance, to the delight of every member of the audience, young or old. The next pause affords an opportunity for similar witticisms, the only additional fun being that of the clown making ludicrous grimaces at the riding-master every time his back is turned; and finally quitting the circle by jumping over his head, having previously directed his attention the other way."—(*Boz.*)

The Amphitheatre was burned down again in 1841 and Ducrow's losses amounted to over £20,000. The shock of this so affected his mind that he died soon afterwards, melancholy mad. The house was rebuilt soon afterwards and opened by William Batty, the owner of a large stable near Bayswater, who continued the series of equestrian performances that had made Astley's famous. Under the management of Batty's successor, William Cooke, "Macbeth" was transformed into an equestrian tragedy, and in 1869 the renowned Ada Isaacs Menken, an extremely elegant, full-figured lady, created something of a sensation as "Mazeppa," in which she was bound to a fiery steed and borne over the dreadful steppes of Crim Tartary! Menken, by the way, who married Heenan the Boxer, was something of a poetess. Other horsey heroes and heroines continued to attract huge audiences when the West End houses were empty and under the management of his successor, Lord George Sanger, the place lasted down to comparatively recent times.

Astley's was notorious for its advertising tricks. Not content with plastering the town with posters announcing Unrivalled and Unique Equestrian Exhibitions, Batty and his successors organised all sorts of pranks for calling attention to the place. On one occasion Monsieur Emidy, the "master of the horse," drove 14 pairs of horses from Lambeth to Greenwich and back in two hours and a half. In addition to the twenty-eight horses in harness there were numbers of outriders, while the coach drawn by this unique team was occupied by a blaring brass band. Another time, one of the clowns, named Barry, sailed down the Thames from Vauxhall Bridge to Westminster Bridge in a washing-tub drawn by four geese. Thousands watched him from the shore, while the

waterway was crowded with craft of all sorts, cheering and laughing at his antics with the fractious birds.

Taking advantage of the crowds drawn to London by the Great Exhibition, Batty opened a Hippodrome in 1851, at the corner of Kensington Road and Victoria Road. It was a large, oval building with a fine ring and accommodation for some 14,000 spectators, the whole place being open to the four winds of heaven. Wonderful scenes of pageantry were enacted there—horses racing camels and ostriches, feats of human and canine equitation, balloon ascents of appalling skill and daring. On one occasion Mr. Barr, “the celebrated falconer,” introduced his highly-trained hawks and peregrine falcons so that “lovers of the sport may now be gratified, as such an exhibition has not been seen in this country since the days of Henry VIII.” Doors were open daily at half-past five, the show began at six and prices ranged from 6d. to 3s.

Less exciting, but almost as popular as the Hippodromes were the Waxwork Shows. Madame Tussaud’s was, of course, the most popular. Until the erection of the building so recently destroyed by fire, her exhibition was housed on the first floor of the Baker Street Bazaar, and at the door, taking the entrance money, sat the little Frenchwoman herself, until shortly before her death in 1850. The figures, numbering in that year some 250, were mostly ranged in a large mirrored salon, from which opened three smaller rooms, the Chamber of Horrors, the Napoleon Room, and the Hall of Kings where waxen royalty held court.

Another famous waxwork was that of Mrs. Salmon which, for many years at the beginning of the century, was housed in Prince Henry’s Room, Fleet Street, opposite Fetter Lane. Every provincial visitor to London went to see Mrs. Salmon, especially since, across the road, was that other famous spectacle, the moving giants of St. Dunstan’s clock who struck the passing hours on a bell. The clock is now in St. Dunstan’s, Regent’s Park, but Mrs. Salmon’s waxworks have long since melted.

The best way to describe the minor amusements and entertainments of London is to select a week—during that gala summer, say, of 1851—and give some idea of what was going on.

Apart from the theatres, the pleasure gardens and eques-

trian shows such as Astley's and Batty's, most of the entertainments provided for pleasure seekers were of an instructive nature, for the Panorama, then at the height of its popularity, did not lend itself to anything but solid improvement of the mind.

The Panorama and its child the Diorama are, I suppose, direct though remote ancestors of the cinematograph. Sir Joshua Reynolds had witnessed with pleasure the first panorama, which was merely a picture painted round the circumference of a room, and the idea had been improved upon by Robert Burford until it developed into a popular form of entertainment. The next advance was the Moving Panorama, introduced from America. This was a long continuous picture, some 30 feet in height and 300 or 400 yards long, which was slowly unrolled and passed before the seated spectators who were thus enabled to see "many miles of country and foreign scenes without trouble and at little cost." There was usually a lecturer to point out beauties of Nature or objects of interest and help to infuse some air of lightness into what might have been a dull show.

The Diorama was a stationary affair though the floor on which the spectators were seated was occasionally swung round to enable them to see each portion of the picture which was in a separate room and was viewed through an aperture. This arrangement allowed of artistic scenic and lighting effects and enabled the producers to turn out really excellent and realistic pictures of different parts of the world.

Chief among the homes of panorama was the Egyptian Hall almost opposite the Burlington Arcade, Piccadilly. Dating from 1812, the hall had given Londoners a variety of exhibitions, including Scurat, the "Living Skeleton," who was on show in 1825, and the Siamese Twins, who appeared four years later. In 1831, the first cobra di capello to be brought alive to Europe made its debut there. In the same year two orang-utans and a chimpanzee divided honours with M'Kean, a double-sighted boy, whatever that might be, accompanied by a double-sighted dog. Human monstrosities, exhibitions of carpets, Catlin's pictures of North American Indians, each in its turn drew crowds, but they were all beaten by Tom Thumb whose exhibition in 1844 realised as much as £145 a day. In an adjoining room Haydon was show-

ing some of his pictures, but the room of paintings was quite deserted in favour of the American abortion and Haydon's death was actually hastened by mortification at this slight.

In 1845 the Egyptian Hall attraction was Eureka, an automaton that composed Latin hexameters, and soon afterwards came the Wild Man of the Prairies, which, according to the advertisement was called " ' What is it ? ' because this is the universal exclamation of all who have seen it. Its features, hands and the upper portion of its body are to all appearances human ; the lower part of its body, the hind legs, and haunches are decidedly animal ! It is entirely covered, except the face and hands, with long flowing hair of various shades. ' What is It ? ' is decidedly the most extraordinary being that ever astonished the world. It has the intelligence appertaining to humanity, and can do anything it sees done or anything which man or animal can do, except speak, read or write." This remarkable creature turned out to be nothing more mysterious than a very nasty little dwarf dressed in a bearskin.

In 1848 Banvard's wonderful Dioramic picture of the Mississippi River, exhibiting 3000 miles of views, was announced as painted on canvas three miles in length, though it really measured about a quarter of a mile. Following Banvard, was Fremont's Overland Route to Oregon, Texas and California.

In another room was a Grand Moving Panorama of the Nile, in which the spectator was supposed to embark at Cairo, travel up the river facing the left bank and having reached the Second Cataract, return with his eyes fastened on the eastern shore. In yet another room was a Diorama of the Holy Land in which " pilgrims, having commenced where the Israelites began their wanderings, terminate among the scenes consecrated by Our Saviour's presence."

The best of all the Egyptian Hall panoramas, however, was Albert Smith's Ascent of Mont Blanc, exhibited in 1852. The painting was by Beverley, a well-known panoramic artist, but it was Smith's story, his mixture of humour and florid description, which drew crowds and made his show one of the most popular in London during the next six years. People would go again and again for the pleasure of seeing the little man pop on to the platform out of a side door and lean on the piano, pointer in hand, while he rattled off funny

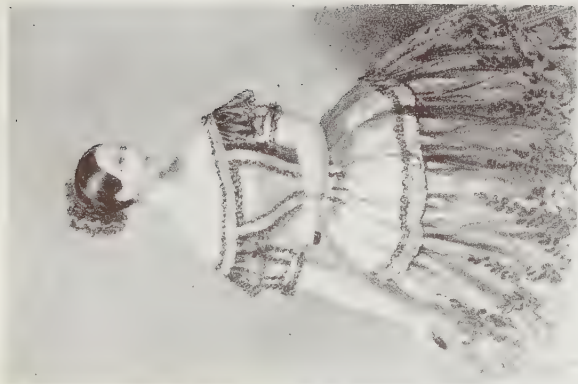
stories and related his mountaineering experiences. An account of the first night of his show reads :

“On his arrival at Chillon, Mr. Smith introduced us to an American, and a literary lady—humourous sketches both—though not quite equal to those that varied so effectively ‘The Overland Mail.’ The confusion of the American’s mind relative to Lord Byron and his heroes, identifying the Prisoner of Chillon and Mazeppa with the poet, was rich in comic eccentricity. Among the characters was a Mrs. Seymour, who had lost her black box, and which seems always to have followed her to every place she visited about half an hour after her departure, and had accordingly to be forwarded on and on and on—the lady everywhere inquiring after the box, and giving important directions concerning it. Mr. Smith, as usual, enlivened his narrative with some capital patter songs : those in the first part were ‘The Young England Traveller,’ and ‘Galignani’s Messenger.’ The pictorial portion represented Martigny, in the Valais ; the Convent of the Great St. Bernard, the well-known Avalanche Dead-house, and the Valley of Chamouni.

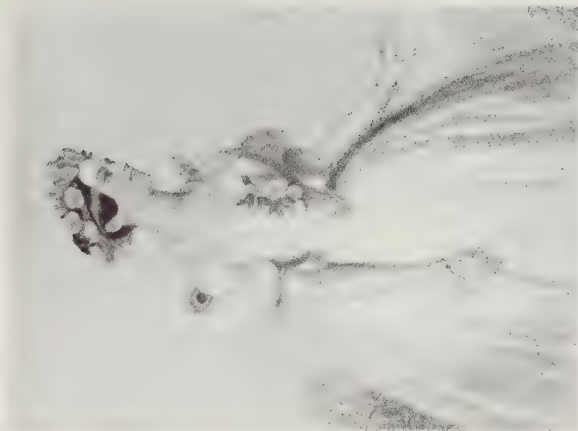
“The second part commenced with the Village of Chamouni and the Cascade and Châtel de Pèlerins ; after which the celebrated ascent was proceeded with. Here it becomes impossible to follow Mr. Smith in his lively and graphic descriptions of the early difficulties and dangers in making the Pierre Pointue, Pierre à l’Echelle and the Glacier des Bossons. Mr. Smith appears to have been quite exhausted just before he reached the summit, and to have experienced some of the phenomena of sleep-waking. But he was well protected by his friends, and at length he stood on the top, in triumph, without feeling it, for he was so overworn that he was unable to attend to the view, and fell off immediately to sleep. During this part, Mr. Smith treated his audience with a specimen of the hurdy-gurdy music of the guides, and the manner in which they sing scraps of Savoyard songs. The lecture itself concludes in a Parisian *café*, accompanied with a metrical description of an Englishman’s way of behaving at a *restaurant* and at a theatre in Paris.”

It was in an adjoining room that, fourteen years later, Artemus Ward delivered his famous lecture.

Another great home of panorama was the Colosseum in



Fanny Elssler
After Edwin D. Smith



Maria Taglionì
After Vital



Carlotta Grisi
After A. E. Chalon, R.A.

QUEENS OF THE BALLET AT HER MAJESTY'S OPERA HOUSE

Regent's Park which stood on the site now occupied by Cambridge Terrace. The Colosseum was something special in its outward design. It had been erected in 1824 from plans by Decimus Burton and was one of the greatest buildings ever devoted to public entertainment, and was a fine affair with a porticoed entrance and a large glazed dome. Five years after its completion a "Panorama of London," as viewed from the dome of St. Paul's, was exhibited. This remarkable painting, covering some 46,000 square feet, was viewed by the spectator from a sort of gallery in the centre. Other panoramas on a like enormous scale followed, including "London by Night"; "A Moonlight Panorama of Paris" (1848); "The Lake of Thun" (1850); while in 1851 the old panorama of London was reinstalled for the benefit of Exhibition visitors.

Besides panoramas the Colosseum had attractions in the form of a Glyptotheca or underground statuary, where casts of classic and modern masterpieces could be viewed in comfort from "the richly embroidered velvet couches in mirrored alcoves" that adorned the surrounding walls. There were, besides, a Swiss Chalet, with appropriate views of glaciers and waterfalls; the Temple of Theseus, with other ruins of antiquity; Stalactite Caverns where "the lights from innumerable chandeliers" threw beautiful rainbow hues on the stucco stalactites and left conveniently dark corners for those who preferred seclusion; splendid conservatories, "laid out with handsome plate looking-glasses;" a Gothic aviary; craggy rocks and other wonders. There was good music, too, and admission cost but two shillings, with sixpence extra for the Stalactite Cavern. It was at the Colosseum that a form of roller skating was introduced in 1844, though it never caught the public fancy.

This huge place failed, however, in 1855, and was shortly afterwards pulled down. It was too far from the centre of things to attract sufficient visitors to make it pay.

Adjoining it, and under the same management, was the Cyclorama, which exhibited the scenery of the Tagus and Lisbon, the Earthquake rendered lifelike by "fearfully agitated waves, amidst which gallant vessels are seen rolling madly on their mountain summits or plunging into the awful depths below."

In Leicester Square was Burford's Panorama, the original but stationary pictures which, by 1851, had been practically ousted from favour. Close by was the Linwood Gallery where "Paris and Versailles" might be viewed in panorama. In another room was a rather remarkable "Diorama of the Ganges," with figures and animals painted by R. W. Buss, the unsuccessful illustrator of two plates in the original "Pickwick Papers." This gallery had once been the home of Miss Linwood's Exhibition of Needlework Pictures, so disrespectfully mentioned by David Copperfield. This exhibition consisted of copies in needlework of some hundred paintings by old and modern masters, all executed by Mary Linwood, who embroidered on a specially prepared background with stitches of different lengths and in wool of her own dyeing. Her last work "The Judgment of Cain" took her ten years to do! After she and her pictures had gone, the galleries were let out to different exhibitors until, in 1865, the whole of Savile House, in which they were situated, was burned down. The Empire Music Hall now stands on the site.

In Leicester Square, too, was The Tourists' Gallery, showing an extensive moving diorama illustrating "A Tour through Europe." Near-by another hall displayed a panorama of "Our Colonial Possessions at the Cape of Good Hope and Port Natal." At No. 14 Regent Street was the Gallery of Illustration where a diorama of the "Overland Route to India" was exhibited in 1851. In an adjoining room another diorama entitled "Our Native Land" made "an attempt to depict the amusements and employments of country life during the several varieties of spring, summer, autumn and winter."

Farther up Regent Street were the Polyorama and the Cosmorama. At the former "Constantinople" was being shown in all its splendour, while the latter exhibited "Delineations of the Celebrated Remains of Antiquity." Passers-by in the Strand were attracted by Brees's "Colonial Panoramas of New Zealand, Australia and Ceylon," largely used to encourage emigration to the Antipodes. Also in the Strand, adjoining the Lowther Arcade, was an exhibition of mechanical singing-birds and animals, including an automaton female organist; some mechanically opening flowers; waxen busts of departed British worthies; a process of egg-hatching by

artificial means ; and views of Windsor Castle interspersed with scenes from Scripture ! Somewhat of the same nature was Cantelo's Hydro-Incubator, showing in Leicester Square, where " all classes, scientific or illiterate " were amazed at the marvels of the incubator.

In 1851 Gordon Cumming, the famous lion-hunter, admitted the public to his collection of African trophies in the Chinese Gallery, Hyde Park Corner, and crowds gathered to see the tusks and skins, or marvel at the wagon in which that intrepid man had lived for over five years in the heart of Africa.

Early in 1851 the desert of Leicester Square was covered with an ugly brick building topped by an immense metal-covered cupola. This was Wyld's Model of the Globe. Wyld was a map-seller at Charing Cross and the idea occurred to him of making a sort of panorama of the Earth. The building he erected contained a huge sphere measuring some sixty-five feet in diameter, in which was placed a raised map of the earth on a scale of ten miles to the inch, that could be viewed from galleries in the centre of the globe. In addition to the actual great map there was rather a good ethnographic collection in adjoining rooms. Guides took parties round the globe at intervals, pointing out and explaining the various physical features of the earth. In 1854 Wyld added a large relief map of the Crimea on which were daily plotted the positions of the opposing armies. Many took advantage of this to see how things were going and explain to each other exactly how Sebastopol ought to be captured.

The Polytechnic Institution, which had first opened to the public in 1838, had a sort of permanent exhibition of mechanical and other models, including an extensive collection of elastic boots, the invention of Mr. Spark Hall, which had proved of great benefit to Her Majesty while climbing the Scottish Mountains !

Mention has been made in another chapter of the Chinese Junk anchored off Temple Stairs. This strange craft, the " Keying " as it was named, had been sailed here from China and after lying up off Blackwall was towed up to the Temple in the autumn of 1847. Crowds flocked to visit her and partake of the Chinese tea and gape at the strange sight of Celestials eating with chopsticks, paying devotions in the

joss-house or sailing their kites. The Thames boatmen who took visitors to the junk's steep sides told harrowing and fictitious stories of adventures in the China seas. Admission was a shilling and Jack expected suitable largess for his lies.

Far pleasanter and more amusing than panoramas were the delightful little entertainments given by Mr. and Mrs. German Reed. Reed had been musical director at the Haymarket and his wife, Priscilla Horton, had already made a name for herself in legitimate drama as a charming and gifted actress. Early in the '50s, they began to give little theatrical sketches, interspersed with songs and music, at the St. Martin's Hall and later on at the Gallery of Illustration. John Parry joined them in 1860 and for many years their entertainments were features of the London season. When Parry left in '69 they took Corney Grain into a partnership which lasted for many years.

Of a somewhat different type were the entertainments given by Arthur Sketchley (George Rose) whose creation of "Mrs. Brown" furnished a whole generation with mirth. "Mrs. Brown at the Play" and "Mrs. Brown in Paris" were inimitable.

Another diversion which caused a sensation at the time was the appearance at the St. James's Hall of Professor Anderson, the Great Wizard of the North, a burly man with a strong Scottish accent. In his programme he styled himself the "Cosmopolitan Monarch of Magicians, Prestidigitator, Illusionist, Physicist, and traveller round the world." A quotation from his programme will suffice to describe the show:

"Since Professor Anderson last had the honour of appearing before the London Public, he has made his Entertainment Circumterranean, hence its present title—THE WORLD OF MAGIC.

"MISS ANDERSON the Modern Mnemosyne and Retro-Reminiscent Orthographist, in her marvellous performance of "Second Sight" as invented and performed by her only.

"THE GREAT RIFLE TRICK to which is called the attention of all the Rifle Volunteers.

"THE EXPOSÉ OF TABLE RAPPING or so-called Spiritualism. Spiritualists test your powers. My table will be visible and movable.

"Professor Anderson's Soirée Fantastique will be found to contain all the known sciences applicable to Natural Magic, with the sources derivable from Chemistry, Dynamics, Hydrodynamics, Acoustics, Optics, Electricity, Galvanism, Electro-Magnetism, etc. The Thaumaturgy of

the Ancients, the Mysteries of the Rosicrucians, Wonders attributed to Cagliostro and the Marvels of Magicians of the Orient will be exemplified at each representation.

"THE SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME will consist of Mesmerism, Hydrostatics and Pneumatics, Prestidigitation, Cheiromancy, Chaldaic Enumeration, The Dead Alive, Hydrodynamics, Pure Natural Magic, Ancient Greek Conjuring, Electricity made into Magic, Magnetism made into Necromancy and Thaumaturgy.

"The PSYCHOMANTHEUM will be on a scale of splendour totally eclipsing all that has ever been done in the Metropolis, designed and executed under the personal superintendence of "Dykwynkyn" assisted by numerous English, French and German artistes. The whole will form en masse superb decoration hitherto unattempted in the Arcana of Magique."

One of the best known and most ridiculed personalities of the '40s and '50s was Louis Antoine Jullien, a man who did more than any other of his time to popularise good music. Jullien came to London from Paris in 1839 and soon afterwards began a series of indoor promenade concerts similar to those which had proved popular at Vauxhall and other pleasure gardens. They were not particularly successful at first, but in 1842 he gave a season at the English Opera House which proved immensely popular. He employed the best musicians of the day and would tolerate nothing but perfection from those under sway of his baton. He had a genius for producing what the public liked and making them like what he produced. His energy was prodigious; he organised *bals masqués*, got up giant quadrilles, published volumes of cheap and pleasant dance music and did much to establish the extraordinary polka mania that swept over England in the mid '40s.

The polka had already captured Paris, when in 1844 it was introduced as a stage ballet by Carlotta Grisi and her partner Perrot. It soon made its way into private dances and in a few months was the rage, producing the usual crop of Polka hats, Polka jackets, Polka boots and Polka ties:

"Don't you dance the Polka?
Won't you dance the Polka?
Joys of earth are little worth
If you don't dance the Polka."

Jullien turned out Polkas by the score:

"Quadrilles and Waltzes all give way
For Jullien's polkas bear the sway."

Jullien's posings and grimacings were wondrous to see. "With coat thrown widely open, white waistcoat, elaborately embroidered shirt front, wristbands of extravagant length, turned back over his cuffs, a wealth of black hair, and a black moustache—itself a striking novelty—he wielded his baton, encouraged his forces, repressed the turbulence of his audience with indescribable gravity and magnificence, went through all the pantomime of the British Army or Navy Quadrilles, seized a violin or a piccolo at the moment of climax, and, at last, sank exhausted into his gorgeous velvet chair. All pieces of Beethoven were conducted with a jewelled baton, and in a pair of clean kid gloves, handed up to him on a silver salver during the silence that preceded the opening bars."

An attempt to establish a National English Opera at Drury Lane failed and Jullien became bankrupt, though he passed through the court without a stain upon his name. In a short while he retrieved some of his fortune by another series of promenade concerts, and after a successful tour of the United States returned to embark his fortunes again on ambitious schemes. But he lost a lot of money in a venture at the Surrey Gardens Music Hall and yet more in the burning of Covent Garden Theatre (1856), where much of his property was stored. Heart-broken at continued misfortunes, Jullien went to try his luck in Paris, was arrested for debt, and after a period of excessive embarrassment which ended by turning his brain, died in a lunatic asylum near Clichy, in 1860, at the age of forty-nine.

It was under his auspices that many famous musicians were heard in London. Camillo Sivori, Paganini's pupil and an exquisite violinist, frequently played the fiddle he had inherited from his master at Jullien's concerts in 1844. He engaged the Distin family, father and four sons already known in London, to play the newly-invented Saxhorn which caused some sensation; Koenig, Ernst, Sainton and many another played under him, and for some twenty years the name of Jullien appeared in some connection or another in the musical column of every London paper.

CHAPTER XI

SENSATIONAL NEWS

Burke and Hare—Resurrectionists in London—Carlile and his Automatic Bookshop—Unknown Tongues—The Greenacre Murder—Benjamin Courvoisier—*The Times* Testimonial—Spring-Heeled Jack—Daniel Good—Assassination of Mr. Drummond—Daniel O'Connell—The Salt Hill Murder—Delarue and Hocker—Hudson, the Railway King—The Rush Murder—The Mannings—Newman and Achilli—Palmer of Rugeley—Redpath and Roupell, Forgers—The Garrotters—Muller and his Execution—Home, the Medium.

CRIMES and sensational law cases have always occupied a prominent place in the interest of a vast number of people ; before the dissemination of world news and football results by cheap newspapers they played a yet greater part in the public imagination. In this chapter it is my purpose to give a brief outline of the most prominent *causes célèbres* which, during this period, occupied the thoughts alike of village wiseacres, City clerks and St. James's "swells."

Seldom has there been a more callous and devilish trio than William Burke, William Hare and Burke's paramour, Helen McDougall. Their hideous crimes were the theme of conversation for years after they were hanged, and although the scene of their activities was Edinburgh, all England was thrilled with the tale of their villainy.

Burke and McDougall, who were living in an Edinburgh slum sometime before the year 1827, were attracted by the large sums of money paid by surgeons for corpses which they desired to use for anatomical demonstration to students. Before the Anatomy Act of 1832, which was introduced expressly to prevent a repetition of such horrors, there was no source whence surgeons could obtain "subjects" except from the gallows or by purchase from the relatives of deceased persons. As there were not many bereaved ones who were callous enough to sell their dead the supply naturally ran short of the demand and many "honest men" of the Jerry

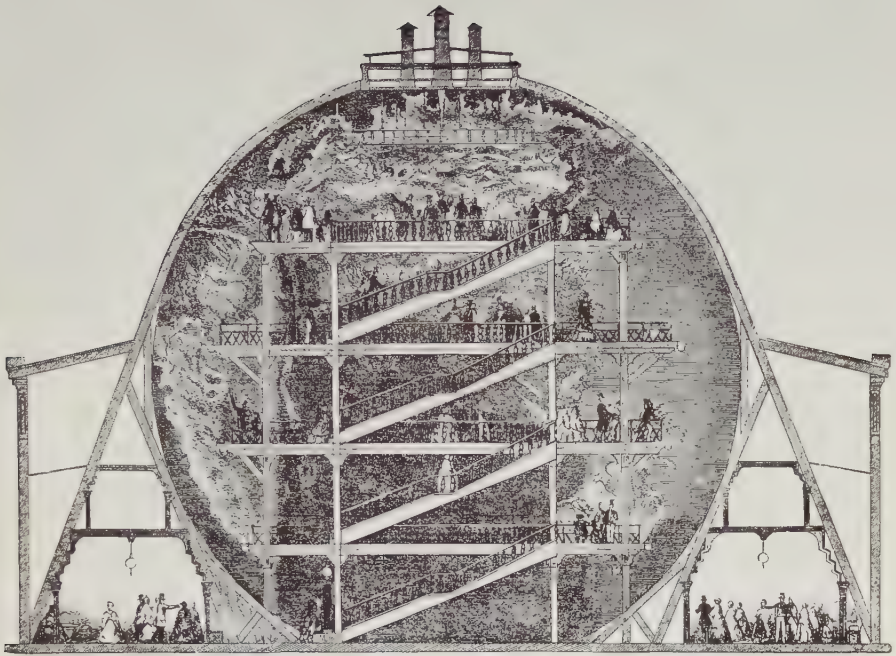
Cruncher breed drove a thriving trade in resurrecting newly buried corpses and selling them to the hospitals and schools of medicine. Whatever their private suspicions may have been, the surgeons refrained from asking awkward questions, and gladly paid these ghouls anything up to ten guineas, according to the youth, preservation and medical value of the "subject."

Possibly Burke and his accomplices had had their avarice whetted by a few successful deals in the resurrection line. Anyhow, they realised what a profitable trade was to be driven by the production of "good" corpses for Edinburgh University. The development of their schemes was easy and inevitable. If corpses were wanted, they would supply them!

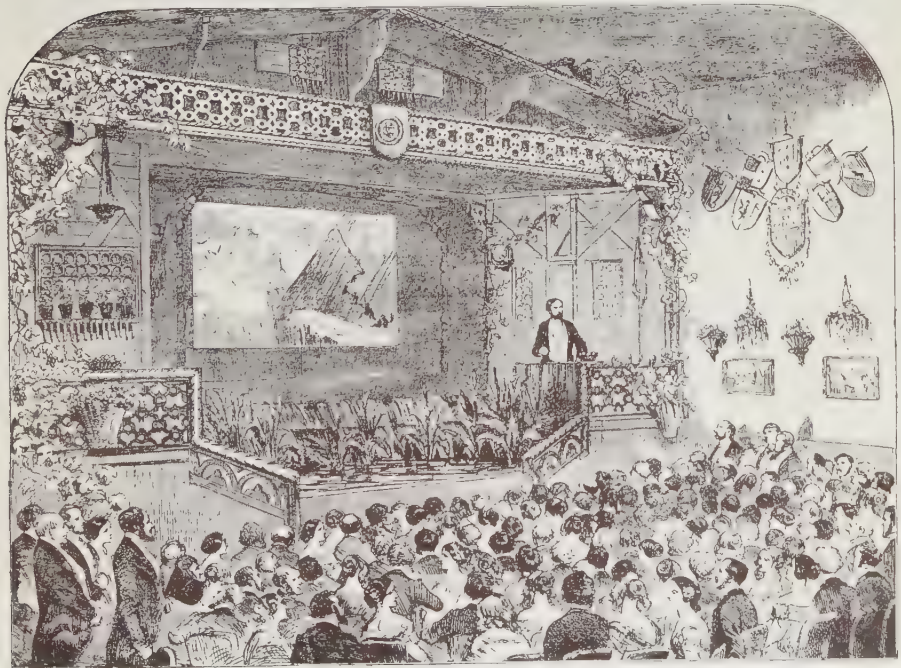
In the miserable alley where Burke and McDougall lived a life of drink and squalor, there were frequent comings and goings of labourers and others of the very poor whose sudden disappearance would either be unnoticed or evoke little comment. So it happened that when one such appeared in the slum, Burke or McDougall would make his or her acquaintance, suggesting that the friendship should be sealed with a drink. The victim, poor and probably thirsty, would follow gladly enough to the Burke hovel, where a regular orgy would soon set in. But Burke always kept his head sufficiently to watch the visitor pass through the various stages of drunkenness until the stage of stupor was reached. Then he would smother him. It was a very simple plan and had the inestimable advantage of ensuring a supply of good, fresh corpses for the dissecting table.

Within twelve months more than fifteen poor wretches were disposed of in this way, and Dr. Robert Knox, to whom most, if not all, of the subjects were sold, must have thought Burke's friends singularly accommodating, dying of no apparent complaint and invariably leaving him their corpses for disposal. But the police got on their trail at last; Hare turned King's Evidence, and on his testimony Burke was found guilty and hanged, January 28, 1829. McDougall was discharged on the jury's finding of Not Proven, and Hare vanished from Edinburgh, wandered up to London and died, some thirty years later, a blind and drunken beggar.

This gruesome story was still the subject of winter evening



Sectional view of Wyld's Model of the Earth, exhibited in Leicester Square in 1851. The globe was 60 ft. in diameter, and modelled on a scale of 10 miles to the inch



Albert Smith at the Egyptian Hall, delivering his lecture on the Panorama of the Ascent of Mont Blanc

whispers when, some three years later, all London was horrified to find itself the scene of a similar atrocity.

One winter evening at the close of 1831, three men called at the dissecting room of King's College and said they wished to dispose of a corpse. Mr. Partridge, the anatomy demonstrator, enquired what sort of subject it was, its size and age, and elicited the reply that it was the body of a boy of fourteen. John Bishop, the spokesman of the trio, demanded twelve guineas for the corpse, but after much haggling agreed to take nine. They then went away, to return soon afterward with the dead body. Mr. Partridge's suspicions were aroused; Bishop and one of his companions, Williams, maintained a stolid demeanour; but May, who was more or less drunk, let fall one or two hints which confirmed the surgeon in his fears. Under pretext of going to get change for a fifty-pound note he fetched the police who promptly arrested all three men.

It came out at the trial that the victim, an Italian white-mice seller named Ferrari, was but one of many who had met their fate at the hands of Bishop and his accomplices. The murderers' procedure was always the same; the victim would be drugged, lowered into a well while insensible and kept there until life was extinct. The body would then be hauled up uninjured, proving an ideal subject for the anatomist.

While the trial lasted public interest was worked up to fever-heat. All day long Old Bailey was crowded from Newgate Street to Ludgate Hill. When the jury retired the agitation outside the court grew more intense; then it was suddenly hushed to a dead silence as a signal was given intimating that the jury had returned to their box. "Guilty!" said the foreman, and before the Recorder could open his mouth to pass sentence such a roar of cheering arose from the crowd, to whom the news spread in an instant, that his voice was drowned in the uproar and not a syllable could be heard in the court. Not until the windows had been closed were his words even faintly audible.

All three were sentenced to death, though at the last moment May was reprieved. The shock of the good news, however, was so great that he fell down in a fit and for some time it was thought that Nature would demand the life the Law had spared.

Williams and Bishop were executed outside the Old Bailey on the morning of December 5, 1831. Popular as public executions always were, never had such scenes been known as accompanied their execution. Over 30,000 persons thronged the narrow street below the scaffold and the scenes of violence, the crowding and pushing, and the consequent accidents, were appalling.

Excitement and discussion of a much milder kind was afforded that same year by the trial and conviction of Richard Carlile for seditious libels likely to cause disturbances. Carlile, a free-thinking publisher and a strong champion of the views of Thomas Paine, had already spent some ten years in prison for refusal to pay certain fines and Church rates. His book-shop was so constantly raided by the police for seditious literature and his assistants so frequently taken into custody, that eventually he had recourse to selling his books automatically. On the counter was a dial with a pointer. Around this dial were the titles of the works he sold, the price being marked against each; the customer simply turned the pointer to which title he required, deposited the price on the counter—and the book automatically dropped down in front of him.

It was in 1831, too, that the interest of more cultured people was aroused by strange happenings at the new Presbyterian Church in Regent Square. During the morning service on October 16th a woman in the congregation suddenly rose from her seat and began to utter a long harangue in gibberish. This might have happened anywhere; but Edward Irving, the minister of the church, acknowledged it as the fulfilment of a prophecy about speaking in Unknown Tongues, and his utterances immediately focussed attention upon him and his doctrines.

Edward Irving, already having the reputation of being a startling preacher, had come to London in 1822. Almost from his arrival he attracted such immense crowds that the Presbyterians built the fine church in Regent Square to accommodate his congregations, and Sunday after Sunday over 1000 worshippers would listen spellbound to his three-hour sermons! By 1828 his views had already begun to be fantastic, but his attitude towards the speaking in Unknown Tongues evoked the complete disapproval of the London Presbytery and he

was removed from Regent Square, in 1832. The following year he was condemned by the Scottish Church for heresy. This broke his heart, and shortly afterwards he died.

Much scandal and infinite gossip were aroused in the summer of 1836 by the action brought against Viscount Melbourne, the Prime Minister, by the Hon. G. C. Norton for *crim. con.* with his wife, the Hon. Caroline Norton, granddaughter of Sheridan. In modern phraseology this was tantamount to citing him as co-respondent. Mrs. Norton, who was twenty-six years of age had already gained some reputation as an author of considerable ability. Her marriage had been a tragedy and eventually ended in separation, but the husband had no case against Melbourne in whose favour a verdict was given. It may be added that Mrs. Norton's unhappy marriage turned her thoughts to the miseries of women and children in the industrial centres of England and her poems: "A Voice from the Factories" and "The Child of the Islands," which appeared in 1836 and 1845 respectively, had much to do with bringing about legislation to amend the evil conditions of life.

On January the 9th, 1837, a woman's head was discovered in the Regent's Canal and examination showed that it fitted in every way a trunk which had been found some ten days previously in the Edgware Road. Almost a month later, on February the 2nd, two legs were found in Coldharbour Lane, Camberwell, and were identified by surgeons as parts of this dismembered body. The public were all agog with excitement, but a couple of months elapsed before an arrest was made. It was then announced that Samuel Greenacre, variously described as a cabinet-maker and a grocer, had been arrested with his paramour Sarah Gale, and that the corpse was that of a poor washerwoman named Hannah Brown. Greenacre had been a scoundrel all his life. He was forty-seven years of age and had had a chequered career in this country and in America, whither he had fled at one time to escape his creditors. He had already married, ill-treated and deserted four wives and, though living with Sarah Gale, had become engaged to Hannah Brown who had laid by a little money. Probably at Gale's instigation Greenacre killed this unfortunate creature—though to the very end he persisted in his story that it was done accidentally—and tried to dispose

of the body as other murderers had done, though with as little success.

Greenacre was the "star" murderer of the day and when he was executed on May 2nd, 1837, huge crowds went to see him die. Hundreds slept in the street outside Newgate the night before and as the dread hour approached the hubbub became deafening. Greenacre was very perturbed at the animosity of the spectators who, when he appeared on the scaffold, greeted him with a storm of yells and hisses to the accompaniment of which the wretched man went to his doom. Sarah Gale was transported for life and in the healthier atmosphere of Australia survived her accomplice some fifty years, dying so recently as 1888.

The next thrill for the public was supplied by a Swiss valet named François Benjamin Courvoisier, in the service of Lord William Russell, a somewhat testy old nobleman of seventy-three. According to the valet's own story, he and his master had had words about some trifling neglect of duty, and in a fit of temper Courvoisier decided to rob Lord William, leave his service and start afresh elsewhere. That night he began to put his scheme into action and was industriously packing various articles of plate when he was disturbed by his master. Apparently satisfied with the man's hastily improvised explanations, Lord Russell returned to his bedroom. Courvoisier went at once to the dining-room, chose a sharp table-knife from the sideboard, crept upstairs to his master's room, and cut his throat from ear to ear. The evidence was indisputable, and Courvoisier's counsel could put up little better defence than the inherent improbability of any member of so estimable a nation as the Swiss committing such a dastardly crime. This, however, did not satisfy the jury, and Courvoisier was duly hanged at Newgate on July 6, 1840.

The following year a civil action turned the attention of the public to "The Times" as a public benefactor. A certain scamp named Allen Bogle sued that paper for an alleged libel in which the plaintiff was stated to be in league with a clever gang of forgers operating throughout Europe by means of bogus letters of credit, mostly on Messrs. Glyn, Halifax, Mill and Co. Bogle won his case on a technical point and was awarded a farthing damages, but "The Times" so added to its prestige by the fearless way it had carried out its duty in

exposing the conspiracy, that the public subscribed handsomely to "The Times" Testimonial, the money of which was devoted to endowing two 'Varsity scholarships for London-educated boys.

At the end of 1837 a mysterious creature named Spring-Heeled Jack made his appearance in London. According to various hysterical reports received by the police, Jack would suddenly dart out on some lonely woman, make horrible grimaces, catch her violently by the arm or neck and with equal suddenness leap backward, disappearing with enormous bounds that carried him into the darkness. He was seen at places as far distant from each other as St. John's Wood and Forest Hill, and assumed strange shapes of terror, sometimes spurting blue fire from his nostrils, at others appearing as a shaggy white bear, on yet other occasions strangely clad in brazen armour. A committee was formed at the Mansion House to tackle the problem of this elusive creature and money was raised to provide a reward for his capture, but after six months of fame and mystery Spring-Heeled Jack leaped into obscurity and was never more heard of. Whether he ever really existed outside the imagination of nervous women will never be known.

One afternoon, early in 1842, Daniel Good, the coachman of a retired East India merchant living at Putney, Quelaz Shiell by name, drove up to a pawnbroker's shop in the neighbourhood and selected some clothes, assuring the assistant that he would return shortly and pay for them. As he was driving away, however, the pawnbroker himself appeared on the scene and demanded the price of the clothes. Upon this, Good whipped up his horse and drove off, followed by the shopman, his boy and a neighbour. They enlisted the services of a policeman and tracked their man to his cottage which was searched but with no result. They then insisted on investigating the stables. Gardner, the policeman, was looking about him in the gloom when he thrust his hand into a large truss of straw and touched what at first he took to be a dead goose. "My God," he exclaimed, as his suspicions were suddenly aroused, "what is this?"

At that moment the searchers were startled by a loud bang. They turned to find that Good had slipped behind them, shut the stable door, locked them in and taken to flight!

Returning to the search they found that the object in the straw was the trunk of a woman and before they had been released from the stable by the servants of the neighbouring house, they had discovered the charred remains of limbs in the harness drying-room. It was Good's wife. For years he had been carrying on intrigues with other women, and whether she goaded him to desperation by her reproaches or whether he contemplated marrying another girl was never known. Some weeks or more later Good was recognised at Tonbridge, where he had obtained work in a brickfield, and was brought back to trial. To the end he maintained that his wife had committed suicide. He was hanged at the Old Bailey, May 23rd, 1842.

Early in 1843 the utmost excitement was caused in London by the attempted assassination of Mr. Edward Drummond, at Charing Cross. Mr. Drummond, Sir Robert Peel's private secretary, had been calling on his brother, one of the well-known bankers, when he suddenly encountered a man who presented a pistol at his breast and fired. Drummond fell wounded, and the assassin, a young man named Daniel MacNaughton was seized by a policeman. For a time it was thought that no serious results would attend the attack, but a rib had been fractured, inflammation set in and Drummond died. At the trial MacNaughton, who could give no lucid explanation of his grievances, was found insane and he was eventually sent to a criminal lunatic asylum.

Apart from all political aspects of the case, the arrest of Daniel O'Connell and his chief lieutenants in 1843 created a great sensation which was kept up in this country, as well as in Ireland, throughout the long and wordy trial. Briefly, the charge was that of having created discontent and disaffection among Her Majesty's subjects. The trial began in Dublin on January 15, 1844 and lasted twenty-eight days. O'Connell defended himself with remarkable ability, but the court found him and his followers guilty, sentence being suspended.

O'Connell made a triumphant journey to London, fêted and complimented wherever he stopped, but on May 30 sentence was pronounced and he was condemned to twelve months' imprisonment and a fine of £2000. This sentence was, however, reversed by the Lords on September 4th and, much to their own amazement, O'Connell and his friends were

liberated, and shortly afterwards returned to Ireland in triumph.

On January the 2nd, 1845, public interest was aroused by the news of a murder committed at Salt Hill, a hamlet near Slough. Sarah Hart, a quiet sort of woman who lived in a cottage with her two children, had been heard uttering such terrible groans that a neighbour, Mrs. Ashlee, was alarmed and ran to the cottage, only to find the woman in the last throes. Mrs. Ashlee had seen a Quaker, John Tawell, leaving the house shortly before and she immediately communicated her suspicions to the Rev. E. T. Clampnes, vicar of a neighbouring parish, who hastened to Slough Station where he saw a man answering the description given by Mrs. Ashlee, take a ticket for London. Mr. Clampnes thereupon hurried to the station master and induced him to telegraph the facts to the London terminus. This was the first time the electric telegraph was ever used for the apprehension of a prisoner.

Tawell was watched by the police on his arrival at Paddington. He was seen to get into an omnibus and a detective sergeant, pushing the real conductor inside as though he were a fare, himself acted as conductor until Tawell alighted at the corner of Princes Street, Bank. He was then followed to the Jerusalem Coffee House, and the next day was arrested. The wonderful use of the "Electro Magnetic Telegraph" had struck the public imagination and Tawell's trial was followed with engrossed interest. Despite his sober garb and Quaker profession he was proved to be an utter scoundrel who had been transported for forgery, had made a fortune in Sydney and had then returned to England. His victim, Sarah Hart, was a family servant with whom he had a liaison. Either tired of her or, according to his own account, to get rid of her without his wife knowing of the affair, he administered prussic acid in a glass of stout. Throughout the trial, in which one damning feature after another was brought to light, Tawell remained confident of his acquittal; but when Baron Parke began his summing-up he knew the inevitable result. He was executed at Aylesbury, where the trial had been held, on March 28, 1845.

Meanwhile another crime had gripped the public interest. On the evening of February 21 a Hampstead baker named Hilton was driving along the Finchley Road when he heard

loud cries of "Murder! Murder!" coming from the direction of a footpath that in those days led to Belsize Park. He gave the alarm, some foot passengers joined in the search, and a little later a man was found lying in a pool of blood by a stile, dead but still warm. He was soon identified as James Delarue, a music teacher of Euston Square, and his murderer, who was arrested close to the scene of the tragedy, proved to be Thomas Henry Hocker, a youth of 22 and a close friend of Delarue. Despite a rambling statement by the prisoner that he had killed Delarue in revenge for having seduced his sweetheart, there was little doubt in court that the crime was committed for theft, although the sum he could possibly steal amounted to but a few pounds. The murderer was executed outside the Old Bailey on April the 28th.

For some reason Hocker created a kind of furore. During his examination by the coroner it was observed that he was addicted to taking snuff. On his next appearance he was almost mobbed in the witness-box by men asking him to give them a pinch, many of these morbid admirers going so far as to wrap the precious dust in paper, to be taken home to an admiring family and treasured as a gruesome relic.

During the few years the Railway Mania lasted, the name of George Hudson was almost as well-known as that of the Queen. A draper of York, he had a shrewd idea of the future of railways and when, sometime in the '30s, he came into a fortune of £30,000 he invested it in North Midland Railway shares. Extending his interest and influence in railway undertakings, by 1837 he had become chairman of the York and North Midland Railway, and was largely instrumental in the construction of other north country lines. In 1842 Hudson introduced the Railway Clearing House, organised a combination of lines which became the Midland Railway, and became its first chairman. Two years later, when the mania was at its height, more than 1000 miles of railway were under his control and the vast fortune arising from these investments gave him the popular title of "The Railway King." He built a palatial residence at Albert Gate, now occupied by the French Embassy, and lived in regal style—until the crash came in 1849. It was then discovered that Hudson had appropriated some £145,000 worth of shares in a northern railway. The sensation was tremen-



dous, swindled investors uttered wild threats but no steps were taken against him, though he was obliged to leave the country.

The Rush murder, in 1848, was probably the most "popular" murder of its time and is still a classic among the crime stories retold week after week in certain Sunday papers.

Isaac Jermy, at one time Recorder of Norwich, was a wealthy man who lived at Stanfield Hall, a short distance from Wymondham. James Bloomfield Rush, a powerfully built farmer, rented from him Potash Farm, a few hundred yards from the Hall. Some years previously Mr. Jermy had lent Rush various sums of money, amounting to about £5000, and these were due for repayment on the last day of November 1848. A year before the settlement fell due, however, Jermy and Rush quarrelled; the former threatened to eject his tenant, while Rush retorted with the remark that it would not be long before he served Jermy with an ejectment for the other world. In the following May (1848) Rush became bankrupt, and evolved a desperate scheme to clear himself from his difficulties; in pursuance of this he forged certain documents purporting to come from Jermy postponing the repayment of the money and confirming him in the possession of his farms. These were witnessed by Emily Sandford, a girl whom he had brought down from London to teach his children and with whom he had contracted an intimacy. It now only remained for Jermy to die in order to give Rush the opportunity of producing these false deeds and thus weathering the storm.

On the evening of November the 28th Rush left Sandford in the farm and walked across to his landlord's. Mr. Jermy had remained alone in the dining-room, his son and daughter-in-law having already gone to the drawing-room. As Rush entered the hall he encountered Mr. Jermy at the dining-room door. Rush had brought with him a gun loaded with slug; at sight of his enemy he fired and killed him instantly. The report fetched young Mr. Jermy hurriedly from the drawing-room; as he dashed out to see what was the matter Rush fired at him, and he, too, was killed on the spot. His wife followed him into the hall, where the first thing she saw was her husband's corpse. The murderer fired at her and the maid, Sarah Chesney, but only wounded them.

The police were soon on the spot and Rush was arrested. His trial attracted the utmost interest in all parts of the country, especially when Sarah Chesney, the faithful maid, who had been badly wounded, was brought into Court to give her evidence in a sort of palanquin. The trial lasted some four days, but the jury took only the same number of minutes to return a verdict of guilty, and on April 29, Rush was hanged outside Norwich Gaol.

No less classic is the Manning murder which took place the same year. The story is almost too well-known to bear repeating, but there is one feature of it worth noting. Dickens witnessed the public execution of these monsters outside Horsemonger Lane Gaol and was so overcome with disgust that he wrote a tremendous letter to "The Times" which had considerable effect in helping to do away with the revolting spectacle of public executions.

The whole country was absorbed in the Mannings, whose case was briefly this: Maria Manning was a Frenchwoman (prototype of Mademoiselle Hortense in *Bleak House*) who, with the connivance of her husband, carried on an intrigue with a lover named Patrick O'Connor. Deciding to murder him for the sake of some money he possessed, the Mannings invited him to dine off a fine roast goose that had been given them. The poor wretch came, and was shot on entering the house, his corpse being thrown into a pit containing lime which Manning had dug in preparation beneath the kitchen floor. A slab of stone was dragged over the spot and the Mannings sat down to their roast goose with the utmost composure.

While the Papal Aggression Panic was at its height in 1851 public resentment and bigotry were constantly fanned by the employment of renegade monks and priests who toured England under the auspices of various Protestant societies, making most horrific revelations of convent wickedness. One of the chief of these rascals, an apostate Dominican named Achilli, whose scandalous life and flagrant immorality had caused his expulsion by the Order, was exposed and publicly denounced by John Henry Newman in his Birmingham lectures. Taking advantage of the heat of public opinion, Achilli had the impudence to bring an action for criminal libel against Newman, who defended himself by producing

unimpeachable documents and witnesses to prove Achilli's infamous reputation. Where Rome and Catholics were concerned, however, there was no justice to be had in England at that time. Using his summing-up as an opportunity to indulge in every possible bitterness, Lord Chief Justice Campbell further inflamed the jury against the blameless Oratorian, and the verdict was given against him. His fine of £100 and legal costs of £14,000 were paid by subscription among Catholics in all parts of the world !

By 1855 public interest was absorbed in another murder case. In 1846 William Palmer, a surgeon with a rather shady past, took a practice at Rugeley, in Staffordshire. His clients were few and he spent most of his time and all his money in betting. Before long he got into difficulties, but was saved from disaster by the death of his wife from " bilious cholera " in 1854 and the receipt of £13,000 in payment of policies on her life. In August of the following year his brother William died suddenly in Palmer's presence, but the insurance companies refused to pay the £13,000 for which *he* had been insured. On November the 15th a certain Cook, one of the racing men with whom Palmer had dealings, died suddenly at the Talbot Arms, Rugeley, under circumstances which threw such suspicion on Palmer that he was arrested. The bodies of his wife and brother were disinterred and found to bear unmistakable signs of murder by poisoning. Feeling ran so high in Rugeley that an Act was rushed through Parliament enabling the trial to be held in London instead of at Stafford. It lasted twelve days, the best possible counsel being arrayed on either side, and was, perhaps, the most famous trial of its kind, but despite a brilliant defence Palmer was found guilty and hanged outside Stafford Gaol, January 14, 1856. It is practically certain that he had killed several other adults, as well as a number of his own children, legitimate and otherwise, whose infant cries he used to sooth by giving them his finger to suck—with a few specks of arsenic on the tip.

At this period Lord Palmerston was Home Secretary. A deputation arrived from Rugeley to ask his permission to change the name of the town owing to its unsavoury association with Palmer the poisoner. Palmerston thought a while and then, with his quiet sarcastic smile, suggested that

out of compliment to himself they might like to rechristen the place "Palmerston" or "Palmer's Town."

Late in the same year a colossal piece of fraud caught the public imagination. Leopold Redpath, registrar of shares for the Great Northern Railway, was found to have embezzled stock to the value of £250,000 by the simple process of altering the sum standing to the credit of a *bona fide* shareholder by placing a figure before it, thus converting £1000 into £11,000. The difference thus created Redpath sold in the market, covering his tracks by forging the name of the transferring shareholder. Long and bitter controversies followed as to who should bear the loss thus sustained, but it was eventually written off. Redpath, "a man of unblemished reputation and of great charity," as a paper described him shortly before he was found out, was transported for life.

The following year a clever gang of forgers, organised and directed by "Jem the Penman," otherwise James T. Saward, who had been a barrister, was run to earth and its members sent beyond the seas. About the same time the trial in Edinburgh of Madeleine Smith, for the murder of her lover, Emile Angelier, aroused some interest in England. Although the impression after reading a report of the trial is that she was guilty, the verdict returned by the jury was one of "Not Proven."

One of the most remarkable causes ever tried before a court of justice was the Roupell case, in August 1862. William Roupell was the eldest, though illegitimate, son of Richard Palmer Roupell, a wealthy man. After Richard's death a will was produced in which he left some £200,000 to his children. Upon this William came forward with a later document bequeathing the whole fortune to the widow. The later will was duly proved and William, obtaining an ascendancy over his mother, appropriated practically the whole of the estate. He spent £10,000 on becoming M.P. for Lambeth, lived a riotous life for some time and at last, having squandered the whole fortune, fled the country.

After he had gone his younger brother Richard, who had, however, been born in wedlock and was therefore the legal heir, brought an action to recover his father's estate at Kingston, worth about £15,000 which had been sold by William in 1861. As many other estates had been sold in

the same way, any decision in Richard's favour would affect a considerable number of people. Public interest grew intense, especially when it was announced that William Roupell was returning from abroad to give evidence on his brother's behalf.

In due course he arrived and entered the witness-box, whereupon followed the most amazing cross-examination ever heard. To support his brother's case this extraordinary man voluntarily confessed to the whole system of fraud which he had perpetrated for years, relating how he had forged the original will, as well as more than ten deeds and legal documents, amounting in value to over £350,000.

The civil action was hastily compromised, and Roupell was arrested. At his trial he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to penal servitude for life. He was, however, released in 1876.

In the winter of 1862 all London was appalled by a sudden outbreak of ruffianism which took the form of "garrotting" pedestrians and robbing them. One or two men would suddenly spring from the darkness of an area or doorway, catch their victim by the throat, rob him of all he was carrying and then leave him, often choking, in the gutter. These assaults spread with such extraordinary rapidity to all parts of London, that no one felt safe to go alone in the streets by day or night. In most cases the crimes were traced to convicts who had been released under the recently introduced ticket-of-leave system. The stiff sentences awarded at the Old Bailey to such of the culprits as were caught, varying from five years' penal servitude to imprisonment for life, seemed to have no effect in abating the terror. Harmless citizens, postmen, tradesmen's boys, suffered alike until it became the fashion to go about armed with knives and revolvers for self-protection. At last judges began to order the cat-o'-nine-tails for offenders—and "garrotting" ceased almost instantly. But it was a veritable terror while it lasted.

In February 1864 Londoners were edified by the sight of five men—pirates convicted of murder on the "Flowery Land," a vessel within the jurisdiction of the British Admiralty—being hanged in a row outside Newgate. Later in the year public interest was aroused, to the exclusion of all else, by the Muller case.

On the evening of July the 9th a man was getting into a

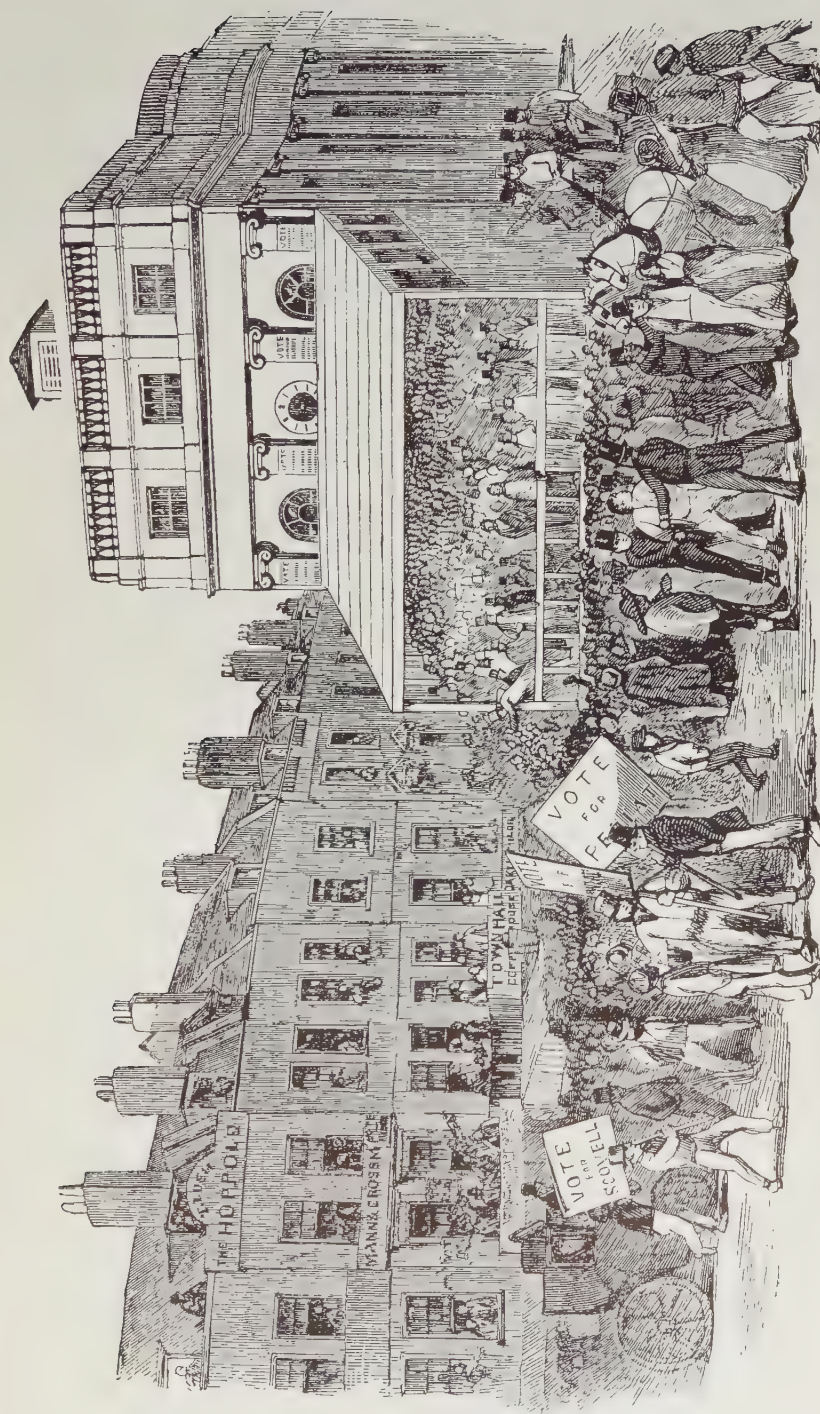
North London Railway train at Hackney Station, when he found that the compartment was smeared with blood and showed every sign of having been the scene of a terrible tragedy. Almost at the same time the driver of another train noticed a body lying by the rails. It was found to be that of Mr. T. Briggs, chief clerk to Robarts' Bank, Lombard Street. The body had been robbed, and the only clue to the murderer was a hat he had left in the carriage. By means of this hat the crime was very cleverly traced to Franz Muller, a German, who had meanwhile fled to America on a slow steamship called the "Victoria."

Immediately, two detectives, accompanied by Mr. Death—a jeweller who identified a small cardboard-box Muller had given to a girl as one which he had sold to Mr. Briggs—and the cabman with whom Muller lodged, took passage on the "City of Manchester," due to arrive in New York a few days before Muller's boat. They reached America in time to arrest him and after a few days he was extradited.

The trial was interesting, much of the evidence resting on identification by means of the hat. Public feeling ran high, and the good looks of Muller won him the sympathy of thousands of girls and women; indeed, on the day of his execution a number of school girls went into mourning. But no amount of sentiment could save him and the jury showed little hesitation in bringing in a verdict of "Guilty."

An abstract of "The Times's" report of Muller's execution will give an excellent idea of what those horrible exhibitions were like :

"The execution was to take place on Monday morning, November the 14th. The Sunday night was clear and moonlight; yet, though all could see and be well seen, it was impossible to tell who formed the staple of the crowd that gathered to their sight so early. There were well-dressed and ill-dressed, old men and lads, women and girls. Many had jars of beer; at least half were smoking, and the lighting of fusees was constant, though not more constant than the cries and laughter as all who lit them sent them whirling and blazing over their heads into the thicker crowd beyond. Occasionally as the rain, which fell heavily at intervals, came down very fast, there was a thinning about the beams; but, on the whole, they stood it out very steadily, and formed a



FREE AND INDEPENDENT VOTERS AT THE HUSTINGS, SOUTHWARK TOWN HALL,
IN THE ELECTION OF 1852

thick, dark ridge round the enclosure kept before the Debtors' Door, where Muller was to die. This was at one o'clock, when the moon was bright, the night was very clear indeed and everything could be seen distinctly. Newgate was black enough in its blind massiveness, except at one little point high over the walls, where one window in the New Wing showed a little gleam of light, to which it seemed the crowd was never tired of pointing as the spot where Muller lay in his condemned cell. Truly enough, it had been known outside where he was kept, and this miserable flicker in the black outline of the great gaol, which only marked one wide division of its wards where Muller was imprisoned, became the centre of all eyes.

"Until about three o'clock not more than some 4000, or at the most 5000 were assembled; and over all the rest of the wide space the white, unoccupied barriers showed up like a network of bones above the mud. But about three the workmen came to finish the last barriers after the scaffold had been carried to the Debtors' Door, and from that time the throng increased rapidly. Worse in conduct it could not be, though still night hid its ruffianism. Someone attempted to preach in the midst of the crowd, but his voice was soon drowned amid much laughter. Then there was another lull—then, again, another man, stronger in voice and more conversant with those he had to plead before, began the old familiar hymn of 'The Promised Land.' For a little time this man sang alone; but at last he was joined by a few others, when another and apparently more popular voice gave out some couplet in which at once, and as if by magic, the crowd joined with the chorus of

' Oh my !
Think I've got to die !'

Till this was superseded by the song of

' Muller, Muller,
He's the man !'

"All the vocal efforts, however, were cut short by the dull rumbling sounds which, amid cheers, shouts, whoopings, clapping of hands, hisses, etc., heralded the arrival of the dirty old gallows. This was, for the time, a great diversion,

and the crowd cheered or hissed in parts, or as the humour took them, while the horses were removed and the lumbering black box was worked back slowly and with difficulty against the door of the gaol. The shouts and obscene remarks which were uttered as the two upright posts were lifted into their places were bad enough, but they were trifles as compared with the comments which followed the slow efforts of the two labourers to get the cross-beam into place. At last this was finished and then, amid such yells as only such sight-seers and so disappointed could give vent to, a strong force of police filed in and took their places, doubly lining the enclosure round the drop, right before the foremost of the hungry crowd, who had kept their places through wet and dry, since Sunday night.

“Far up into Smithfield the keen white faces rose rank above rank, till even where the houses were shrouded in the thick mist of the early dawn the course of streets could be traced by the gleam of faces alone, and all, from first to last, from nearest to farthest, were clamouring, shouting and struggling with each other to get as near to the gibbet as the steaming mass of human beings before them would allow.

“Literally nearly 50,000 people were crammed between the walls of this wide thoroughfare. At last, when it was near eight o'clock, there came shouts of ‘Hats off!’ and the whole mass commenced, amid cries and strugglings, to wriggle to and fro as the bell of Newgate began to toll, not as it sounded inside the prison, loud upon the ear of the fast-dying man, but with a muffled and foggy boom that never would have quieted the yells of that fierce mob, but that they somehow seemed to yearn and listen always for any token of the last scene yet to come.

“While the murderer stood firm on the scaffold, as the hangman turned the last bolts beneath his feet, Muller with his last words owned his guilt: he bowed his head and said, ‘Ich habe es gethan’—‘I did it.’”

Amongst thinking people the deposition of Colenso, Bishop of Natal, in December 1863, caused a sensation. His doubts as to the literal accuracy of portions of the Old Testament had aroused much discussion and most people of religious thought took one or the other side. The Privy Council decided that the Archbishop of Capetown (Gray) had

no power to deprive Colenso ; Gray retorted by excommunicating him and consecrating another bishop in his place. But Colenso won the day and returned to his diocese, where he spent the remainder of his days in biblical research and commentary.

The last sensation which I shall mention is the lawsuit between Mrs. Lyon and Home, the famous medium. Mrs. Lyon was a wealthy widow who became interested in spiritualism and attended some of Home's séances. After a time Home gave her messages alleged to have been received from her husband enjoining the widow to adopt Home and give him some £60,000 worth of stock. Extraordinary interest was aroused by the case, during which much evidence was given relating to the newly-discovered realm of psychic powers. The jury, however, were not convinced of Home's genuineness and returned a verdict for the plaintiff.

CHAPTER XII

THE SONGS THEY SANG

“The Storm”—Braham—“All’s Well”—T. H. Bayly—“Alice Gray”—
“The Light Guitar”—“Away with Melancholy”—“Home, Sweet
Home”—Balfe—“The Good Time Coming”—“The Postman’s Knock”
—Death Verses—“Hot Codlins”—“Mrs Monday”—“Jim Crow”—
“Vilikins and his Dinah”—Ironical Ditties—“The Ratcatcher’s Daughter”
—The Great Vance—“Chickaleary Bloke”—George Leybourne—
“Champagne Charlie.”

THERE are few things so typical of a period as its songs. In this chapter some attempt is made to give an idea of what caught the popular fancy in the days of Dickens, though the subject is so large that it will be possible to give only a very superficial glance at these songs which everyone sang. Being no musical critic I mention them solely because everyone *did* sing them, and make no attempt to pass judgment on their merits, beyond remarking that, sentimental or comic, they at least had the merit of being home productions.

In the '30s public taste still favoured the ballads of what Thackeray called the British Brandy and Water School of Song, such as the “Good Old English Gentleman” and “Dear Tom, this Brown Jug that now foams with mild ale”—“songs in which pathos and hospitality are blended, and the praises of good liquor and the social affections are chanted in a baritone voice.”

The memory of Incedon was still fresh in the public memory, Incedon, whose bold and thrilling voice had brought whole audiences to their feet as he sang “Black Eyed Susan” or “The Storm” with its medley of nautical terms and excitement :

“ ‘The Fore-mast’s gone,’ cries ev’ry tongue out
‘O’er the lee twelve feet ’bove deck :—
A leak beneath the chest-tree’s sprung out,
Call all hands to clear the wreck.

Quick the lanyards cut to pieces ;
 Come, my hearts, be stout and bold ;
 Plumb the well—the leak increases,
 Four feet water in the hold ! ”

John Braham, whom Planché called “ The greatest English tenor perhaps ever known, about the worst actor ever seen, and the most unromantic person in appearance that can well be imagined,” was still in his prime, swaying the passions of audiences with his terrific rendering of “ The Bay of Biscay,” or, better still, his own famous composition “ The Death of Nelson.”

“ The orchestra struck up ‘ Twas in Trafalgar’s Bay,’ ” it is narrated of one occasion, “ and even before he had opened his lips the very symphony was applauded to the echo. This spirited and also pathetic song touched the hearts of the audience, and their shouts for a second encore were so persistent that it was in vain the singer tried to pacify them with smiles and bows ; no, it was a marine audience, and a sea song they were determined to have. A demand was made for ‘ The Bay of Biscay,’ and whatever Braham’s intention may have been, there was nothing for it but compliance. He sang ‘ The Bay of Biscay,’ the lull was positively startling—it was a calm in which after the discordant cries his melodious voice seemed additionally sweet, but no sooner had the last mellifluous note died away than a simultaneous and intensified shout burst forth, the shrill cries of women and hurrahs of men combining to support the bravos and clappings of ladies as well as gentlemen.”

One of the greatest duets ever sung by Incledon and Braham was Dibdin’s “ All’s Well,” to which so many allusions are made by Dickens. This was long a favourite at all glee parties and harmonic evenings and for years was one of the best male voice songs in English :

“ Deserted by the waning moon,
 When skies proclaim night’s cheerless gloom
 On tower, or fort, or tented ground
 The sentry walks his lonely round ;
 And should a footstep haply stray
 Where caution marks the guarded way,
 ‘ Who goes there, stranger, quickly tell ? ’
 ‘ A friend ?—the word ?—good night, All’s well.’ ”

One of the first really sentimental songs to catch the public fancy was J. Augustine Wade's "Meet me by Moonlight Alone" which was first sung by Madame Vestris, and for some years enjoyed enormous popularity :

"Meet me by Moonlight alone
And then will I tell you a tale,
Must be told by the moonlight alone
In the grove at the end of the vale ;
You must promise to come, for I said
I would show the night flowers their queen ;
Nay, turn not away thy sweet head
'Tis the loveliest ever was seen."

Almost as popular was "Love's Ritornella" by Tom Cooke which appeared in 1829, in the opera of "The Brigand." Cooke, famous as a tenor in his day and a composer of considerable ability, will be better remembered, perhaps, as the teacher of Maria Tree and Sims Reeves. At different times he was musical director of Covent Garden and Drury Lane.

No writer of lyrics and songs acquired such enormous popularity as T. Haynes Bayly. His first success was "I'd be a Butterfly," followed by a series of sentimental lyrics, some of which he put to music himself while others were set by Bishop and various well-known composers. "We Met—'twas in a crowd," appears even yet in song-books ; so does "She Wore a Wreath of Roses," the music of which was by J. P. Knight, while "The Mistletoe Bough," with Bishop's setting, is still familiar when the season of waits and carols comes round.

At the time, Bayly's most popular song, set to music by Bishop, was :

"Oh no, we never mention her,
Her name is never heard,
My lips are now forbid to speak
That once familiar word.
From sport to sport they hurry me
To banish my regret
And when they win a smile from me,
They think that I forget."

It was the day of puns and parodies and a popular variant of this rather mawkish song ran :

“I wish you wouldn’t mention her,
 Her name I hates to hear,
 For when I do, upon my word
 It makes me feel so queer !
 From wine to rum they hurry me,
 From rum to heavy wets ;
 And when they wins a song from me,
 They thinks that I forgets.”

Another favourite of Bayly’s was :

“She never blamed him—never—
 But received him when he came,
 With a welcome kind as ever,
 And she *tried* to look the same !”

In the ’30s appeared Mrs. Millard’s “Alice Gray” which, it will be remembered, Dick Swiveller applied with such ingenuity to his lost love, Sophy Cheggs :

“She’s all my fancy painted her.
 She’s lovely ! She’s divine !
 But her heart, it is another’s,
 She never can be mine ;
 Yet lov’d I as man never loved,
 A love without decay,
 Oh ! my heart, my heart is breaking
 For the love of Alice Gray.”

“Kathleen Mavourneen” was first published about 1838, in a collection of songs by Nicholls Crouch. Its success was fabulous, and though the composer only received £10 for his work, the publishers netted over £15,000 and many years later sold the music plates alone for £530. Of all the favourites of those days “Kathleen Mavourneen” is, perhaps, the most certain of immortality, ranking with the equally popular Irish Melodies of Moore, too well known to need more than this passing mention. Moore, it may be observed, was Dick Swiveller’s favourite, and it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that a hundred years ago everyone sang or whistled his melodies.

Gentlemen as socially remote from each other as Mr. Wisbottle and Silas Wegg alike enjoyed John Barnett’s

“Light Guitar” which had been sung with inimitable grace by Madame Vestris :

“Oh, leave the gay and festive scene,
The halls of dazzling light ;
And rove with me through forests green,
Beneath the silent night ;
Then, as we watch the ling’ring rays
That shine from every star,
I’ll sing thee songs of happier days,
And strike the light guitar.”

This lent itself to innumerable parodies—many with at least as much sense as the original—the most popular being “The Mild Cigar” which was written and sung with great applause by W. H. Freeman :

“Oh, leave the noisy, smoky scene,
The streets of glaring light
And take a stroll to Turnham Green
And we’ll return at night.
Then as we watch the stages pass
And hear their wheels afar ;
Of grog we’ll take a cheerful glass,
And smoke a mild cigar !”

Silas Wegg adapted another song which had a great vogue in its time : “The Soldier’s Tear,” also was by Bayly, and set to music by the equally prolific Alexander Lee :

“Upon the hill he turned to take a last fond look
Of the valley and the village church, and the cottage by the brook ;
And listened to the sound so familiar to his ear ;
The soldier leaned upon his sword and wiped away a tear.”

All Dickensians will remember Dick Swiveller’s flute solo of “Away with Melancholy,” a song with which Sam Weller was also familiar. As a duet, set to an air from Mozart’s “Magic Flute,” it was frequently heard at glee clubs and harmonies :

“Away with melancholy,
Nor doleful changes ring,
On human life and folly,
But merrily, merrily sing—
Fa, la, la.”

Barry Cornwall was the author of songs of a rather more vigorous type. "The lustiest musical nuisance that ever took possession of the town" as Charles Mackay called it, was Cornwall's song, set to music by the Chevalier Neukomm :

"The sea, the sea, the open sea,
The blue, the fresh, the ever free."

Of his many other pieces, the best known in his own day was probably "King Death," also with Neukomm's setting, which gave great scope to bass voices. "Mr. Bogsby puts up 'The Popular song of KING DEATH! with chorus by the whole strength of the company' as the great Harmonic feature of the week."—(*Bleak House*, 33.)

"King Death was a rare old fellow—
He sat where no sun could shine
And he lifted his hand so yellow,
And poured out his coal black wine.
Hurrah! for the coal black wine!"

"Home, Sweet Home" had made its first appearance in May, 1823, in the opera of "Clari, the Maid of Milan." The setting was by Bishop and its touching rendering by Maria Tree brought the song into immediate favour which was to prove immortal. In the first year alone over 300,000 copies were sold and it has appeared among the favourite numbers of most singers since, such as Jenny Lind, Antoinette Sterling and Adelina Patti. The words were adapted by an American, J. H. Payne, from a lyric of Bayly's.

Besides ballads of which some examples have been given, there was a great run on pieces from the operas of Rossini, Donizetti and Mozart; yet even these classics were drowned, so to speak, in the sudden volume of song produced by the three composers who reached their zenith in the '40s—Balfe, Wallace and Verdi.

Balfe's opera "The Maid of Artois" appeared in 1836, Henry Phillips, the baritone, made an extraordinary hit in it with "The Light of Other Days." For nearly a year this was the most popular song in England. Then in 1843, Balfe produced "The Bohemian Girl" and for months and years to come there was scarcely a house in the land where someone was not singing "When Other Lips" or "I dreamt

that I dwelt in marble halls," the music of which even yet gives scope to the itinerant cornet player.

Many of Balfe's songs are still sung or are coming once more into favour; "The Arrow and the Song," "Good Night, Beloved," "Come into the Garden, Maud," and last, but not least, "Killarney" are certain of immortality. At the time of their appearance their vogue was enormous—all the more so because they had to be learned and sung, there being no gramophones nor wireless to save the exertion and chill the enthusiasm of the amateur.

The lyrics of Balfe's songs and operas were mostly by Edward Fitz-Ball, a well-known librettist who also wrote the words to which Wallace composed his masterpiece of "Mariana." The songs from this opera are as well-known as any of Balfe's: "In Happy Moments Day by Day," "Alas, those chimes so sweetly stealing," "'Tis the harp in the Air," and the more vigorous "Yes, let me like a soldier fall," are classics too familiar to need comment. Nor, indeed, is it necessary to do more than mention Verdi's operas which attained an unprecedented popularity in England. Those who could sing them in Italian, for those who could not, there were English renderings—in either case the tune was the thing.

The vogue of many of the descriptive ballads in the '50s was largely due to the catchiness and beauty of Henry Russell's setting of Charles Mackay's words. His "Woodman, Spare that Tree," was the most successful of that class of song. It was followed by "A Life on the Ocean Wave," while others which gained great popularity were "Cheer, boys, cheer!" and "There's a good time coming":

"There's a good time coming, boys,
A good time coming;
We may not live to see the day,
But earth shall glisten in the ray
Of the good time coming.
Cannon balls may aid the truth
But thought's a weapon stronger;
We'll win our battle by its aid;
But wait a little longer."

"Cheer, boys, cheer" was sung by the men setting off to the Crimea much as "Tipperary" was the war-song of a yet Greater War.



One of Jullien's Concerts Monstres, in the summer of 1845



"The Siege of Gibraltar," one of the successful water spectacles
ENTERTAINMENTS AT THE SURREY GARDENS

“Alice, where art thou?” the classic written by Joseph Ascher, became an immediate favourite, though, strange to say, it was at first rather less popular than the now forgotten “Postman’s Knock,” which was composed by W. T. Wrighton, the words being by L. M. Thornton, who received a guinea for them.

“What a wonderful man the Postman is
 As he hastens from door to door,
 What a medley of news his hands contain
 For high, low, rich and poor;
 In many a face he joy doth trace,
 In as many he grief can see,
 As the door is ope’d to his loud Ran-tan,
 And his quick delivery.
 Ev’ry morn, as true as the clock,
 Somebody hears the Postman’s knock.”

This rather uninspiring song was carolled by every urchin, piped upon tin whistles by small boys, dramatised at the Haymarket, put on horseback at Astley’s, ground on every barrel-organ throughout the country. As usual the publishers made a fortune out of it—and Thornton died a pauper in Bath workhouse.

Before proceeding to remark on the comic songs of this period I must give an example of the Death Verses or Sorrowful Lamentations purporting to be the last dying speeches of murderers on their way to the scaffold. These had an enormous popularity among the poorer classes, were sung in the streets by ballad singers and solemnly chanted at tap-room firesides or family gatherings:

“The solemn bell for me doth toll,
 And I am doom’d to die
 (For murdering my brother dear),
 Upon a tree so high.
 For gain I did premeditate
 My brother for to slay,—
 Oh, think upon the dreadful fate
 Of wretched Mary May.

CHORUS.

“Behold the fate of Mary May,
 Who did for gain her brother slay.

“ In Essex bound’ry I did dwell,
My brother lived with me,
In a little village called Wix,
Not far from Manningtree.
In a burial club I entered him,
On purpose him to slay ;
And to obtain the burial fees
I took his life away.

“ One eve he to his home return’d,
Not thinking he was doom’d,
To be sent by a sister’s hand
Unto the silent tomb.
His tea for him I did prepare,
And in it poison placed,
The which I did administer,—
How dreadful was his case.

“ Before he long the poison took
In agony he cried ;
Upon him I in scorn did look,—
At length my brother died.
Then to the grave I hurried him,
And got him out of sight,
But God ordain’d this cruel deed
Should soon be brought to light.

“ I strove the money to obtain,
For which I did him slay,
By which, also, suspicion fell
On guilty Mary May.
The poison was discovered,
Which caused me to bewail,
And I my trial to await
Was sent to Chelmsford jail.

“ And for this most atrocious deed
I at the bar was placed,
The Jury found me guilty,—
How dreadful was my case.
The Judge the dreadful sentence pass’d,
And solemn said to me,
‘ You must return from whence you came
And thence unto the tree.’

“ On earth I can no longer dwell,
There’s nothing can me save ;
Hark ! I hear the mournful knell
Which calls me to the grave.

Death appears in ghostly form,
 To summon me below ;
 See, the fatal bolt is drawn,
 And Mary May must go.

“ Good people all, of each degree,
 Before it is too late,
 See me on the fatal tree,
 And pity my sad fate.
 My guilty heart stung with grief,
 With agony and pain,—
 My tender brother I did slay
 That fatal day for gain.”

It will have been noticed that nearly all the popular sentimental ballads are remembered at least by name, but the bygone comic songs are as dead as the taste which admired them, as the people who enjoyed them, as the comedians who sang them. I cannot pretend to give more than a very cursory account of the comics then in vogue, for practically every year had its novelty and every fresh incident evoked fresh humour. Perhaps nothing shows so much the change of taste and outlook on life as a comparison of the great hits of eighty years ago and the standard of humour demanded by the music-hall patrons of to-day, and for this reason a portion of this chapter must be devoted to what may be intrinsically the least worthy of preservation.

“ Hot Codlins ” was probably the greatest and oldest favourite in the '30s. It had been one of Joe Grimaldi's greatest hits so far back as 1806, when he sang it in T. J. Dibdin's pantomime of “ Mother Goose.” For many years “ Hot Codlins ” was expected from the clown in every pantomime, and each time it was sung it aroused fresh applause and demanded an encore—usually “ Tippitty Witchet.” The first two verses are typical of the whole four :

“ A little old woman, a living she got,
 By selling of codlings, hot, hot, hot ;
 This little old woman, as I've been told,
 Though her codlings were hot, grew monstrous cold ;
 And to keep herself warm she thought it no sin,
 To go and get herself a small drop of gin.
 Tol, lol, etc.

“This little old woman, while muzzy she got,
 Some boys stole her codlings, hot, hot, hot ;
 Powder under the pan put, and in it round stones—
 Said this little old woman, ‘these codlings are bones ;
 The powder the pan in her face did send
 Which set this little woman on her end.
 Tol, lol, etc.”

Another long enduring favourite dealing with the same theme was Tom Hudson’s “Mrs. Monday” without which no comic singer’s repertoire was complete :

“One Sunday I went out, and as I walk’d up Holborn Hill
 (I like to be particular) the streets were very muddy ;
 When just about the half way up, quite shock’d I stood stock still.
 A lady slipp’d down flop before me, fat and plump and ruddy ;
 She was in the kennel sprawling,
 To me for assistance calling ;
 Quickly I was pulling, hauling ;
 She did wish to shun day.
 The mud had spoilt her Sunday dressing,
 ‘Dear,’ said she, ‘’Tis quite distressing—
 Lawk ! I’m a pretty mess in—
 Look,’ said Mrs Monday.”

A crowd assembled, but the gallant narrator relates how :

“Heeding not their taunts and titters,
 I ask’d her if my taste would fit hers—
 Would she have some brandy-bitters ?
 ‘I will,’ said Mrs. Monday.”

The result was that Mrs. Monday got thoroughly fuddled, was taken home and the street knight complains that :

“I got for all my care and trouble
 Well banged by Mr. Monday.”

Of a somewhat different type was “Cork-Leg,” sung at Vauxhall “amid rapturous applause.” Far too long to be given in full, it tells of a Dutch merchant who had a cork leg which ran away with him :

“He walked of days and nights a score,
 Of Europe he had made the tour,
 He died !—but though he was no more,
 The leg walked on the same as before.

“My tale I’ve told both plain and free,
Of the rummiest merchant that ever could be,
Who never was buried, tho’ dead we see,
And I’ve been singing his L.E.G. (Elegy).”

When Boz was being shown round the Middlesex House of Correction he “was startled by hearing a voice, which apparently proceeded from the wall, pouring forth its soul in the plaintive air of ‘All Round my Hat,’ which was then just beginning to form a recognised portion of our national music.” This song, which had been originally sung by W. H. Williams about 1835, attained an enormous popularity, won repeated encores at Vauxhall and all the Gardens and Harmonics, and was the whistled classic of its day. It is really hardly a comic and the tune is somewhat plaintive, being the love song of a coster whose sweetheart was sentenced to seven years’ transportation for stealing :

“Oh, I bought my love a ring, on the wery day she started
Which I gave her as a token all to remember me,
And ven she does come back, oh, ve’ll never more be parted,
But ve’ll marry and be happy, oh, forever and a day.
All round my hat I wears a green willow,
All round my hat, for a twelvemonth and a day.
If any one should axe it, the reason vy I wears it,
Tell them that my true love is far, far away.”

For many years the comic Irishman had provided comedians with a never-failing subject of mirth. “Barney O’Brallaghan,” “Arthur O’Bradley” and many another alleged ridiculous figure were immortal favourites—Arthur O’Bradley, indeed, is mentioned in “Humphrey Clinker.” They were all much of the same type :

“I’ve got an acre of ground,
I’ve got it set with praties,
I’ve got of baccy a pound,
And got some tea for the ladies ;
I’ve got the ring to wed,
Some whiskey to make us gaily,
A mattress, a feather bed,
And a handsome new shillelah,
Only say,
You’ll have Mither Brallaghan,
Don’t say nay,
Charming Judy Callaghan.”

—and so on for innumerable wearisome verses.

Forerunner of the flood of nigger minstrelsy that later found such favour in England was "Jim Crow," a curiously unmeaning ballad which became the rage. "Adelphi" Rice introduced it to London in 1836, accompanying the ditty with most remarkable jumps and gyrations, and soon every urchin was singing and dancing :

"I cam from ole Kentucky,
 Long time ago,
 Where I first larn to wheel about
 An' jump Jim Crow.
 Wheel about and turn about,
 And do jis so,
 Ebry time I wheel about
 I jump Jim Crow."

Some years later this gave place to "Buffalo Gals" :

"As I went lum'rin' down de street,
 A handsom gal I chanced to meet,
 Oh, she was fair to view !
 Buffalo gals, can't ye come out to-night
 And dance by the light of the Moon ?"

As the '40s wore on "drunk" comic songs gave place to lyrics of the "Shiverand Shakery" type, of which Jacob Beuler was a prolific and successful author, Clinton setting most of these masterpieces of music :

"All you who're fond in spite of price
 Of pastries, creams and jellies nice,
 Be cautious how you take an ice
 Whene'er you're over warm.
 A merchant who from India came
 Shiverand Shakery was his name,
 A pastry cook did once entice
 To take a cooling, luscious ice.
 The weather hot enough to kill,
 Kept tempting him to eat until,
 It gave his corpus such a chill,
 He never again felt warm.
 Shiverand Shakery, O, O, O !
 Criminy, Crikey, isn't it cold.
 Woo, woo, woo, oo, oo,
 Behold the man who couldn't get warm."

About the same time appeared "Vilikins and his Dinah,"

afterwards revived by Fred Robson with such colossal success in "The Wandering Minstrel" at the Olympic Theatre :

" Oh ! 'Tis of a rich merchant in London did dwell,
He had but one daughter, an uncommon nice gal ;
Her name it was Dinah, scarce sixteen years old,
She had a large fortune in silver and gold.
Singing Too-ral-loo, etc."

Her father ordered Dinah to marry " a husband both gallant and gay " but Dinah protested and at last took poison sooner than be false to her Vilikins :

" As Vilikins vas valiking the garden around
He spied his dear Dinah lying dead on the ground
And the cup of cold pizen it lay by her side,
With a billey-dux a-stating 'twas by pizen she died,
Singing Too-ral-loo, etc."

" He kissed her cold corpus a thousand times o'er
And called her his Dinah though she was no more.
Then swallowed the pizen like a lovyer so brave
And Vilikins and his Dinah lie both in one grave,
Singing Too-ral-loo, etc."

Perhaps a little older than Vilikins, but of the same Cockney breed is " Wery Pekooliar, or the Lising Lovers " :

" Have you e'er been in love—if you haven't I have,
To the little God Koopid I've been a great thlave,
He thot in my bothom a quiver of arrowth,
Like thmall naughty boyth thoot Cock Robinth and thparrowth
My heart wath pure ath the white alabathter,
Till Koopid my bothom he did overmathter.
Then tell me, ye Godth ! How I love one Mith Thulia
There wath thomething about her tho vewy pekooliar."

Having become engaged to the lady, the lising lover was amazed to find her one day " danthing " with another—

" I went neeth day to theold her, when the, to my heart'th core,
Cut me by requeththing I'd come there no more ;
That I should be affronted if longer I tarried,
For neeth week, to another, the wath to be married.
' Godth ! Thulia,' thaid I, ' Why you cannot thay tho ?'
' Oh yeth, but I do, tho you'd better go.'
' Well, I thall go,' thaid I, ' but you'll own it Mith Thulia
Your behaviour to me hath been vewey pekooliar.'"

Of the many popular parodies of this, "Werry Mysterious" and "Werry Obstropulous" acquired a certain vogue.

Some of the comic songs of the '50s were in an ironical vein. During the Crimean War a London favourite began :

"Well, it *is* a rum world that we're all living in,
The poor do the work and the rich spend the tin
And what do the people get for all their toil?
Why, the right when they're dead to six feet of soil!
Now is that right? Can it be right?
It's all very fine, but I'm hanged if it's right."

This was but a mild version of the hot and strong songs written by the Chartist poet and agitator, Ernest Jones, whose "Songs of the Lower Classes" attained notoriety in their day :

"We plough and sow—we're so very, very low,
That we delve in the dirty clay.
Till we bless the plain—with the golden grain
And the vale with the fragrant hay.
Our place we know—we're so very low,
'Tis down at the landlord's feet :
We're not too low—the bread to grow,
But we're too low the bread to eat."

It was in the middle '50s that "The Ratcatcher's Daughter" by the reverend author of "Verdant Green," had a considerable popularity :

"In Westminster not long ago
There lived a Ratcatcher's daughter,
She was not born in Westminster,
But on t'other side the water.
Her father killed rats and she sold sprats,
All round and over the water,
And the gentlefolks, they all bought sprats
Of the pretty Ratcatcher's daughter."

But the trend of the real comic songs was already veering towards the "heavy swell" type of which George Leybourne and the "Great Vance"—names which yet recall brave days to many a grey head—were the sublime expositors :

"Oh, ain't I got a nerve,
At nothing do I swerve,
As strong as steel I always feel,
Oh, haven't I a nerve?"

CHAMPAGNE CHARLIE



"For Champagne Charlie is my name,
Good for any game at night, my boys,
Who'll come and join me in a Spree?"

GEORGE LEYBOURNE AND "THE GREAT VANCE" IN CHARACTER SONGS

THE STYLE BY JOVE!



"This is about the style, Ha, ha!
I think it's just the style, Ha, ha!
My taste excels the howling swells,
By Jove, I'm quite the style, Ha, ha!"

is the chorus of one of the earliest and most popular of this style. Another begins :

“I’m a young man that’s most highly respectable,
My nature’s genteel, and my feelings susceptible.”

By this time the music halls had multiplied to such an extent and produced so many stars, each with his or her popular hit, that it would be impossible to give them the attention they deserve. Billy Randall, with his “Two in the Morning,” Fred Albert and his “Mad Butcher,” Harry Liston who sang “When Johnny Came Marching Home,” J. H. Stead, famous for his remarkable jumping feats while singing the “Perfect Cure” ; Fred Coyne ; Arthur Lloyd—a volume might be written about them and their songs.

But the two who outshone all their contemporaries and whose names will be remembered for many years yet to come were, as I have said, George Leybourne and “The Great Vance.”

“The Great Vance,” whose real name was Alfred Peck Stevens, had been a solicitor’s clerk before he took to the variety stage, where his clever dancing and inimitable skill as a character vocalist brought him immediate fame. “Costermonger Joe,” “Push along, keep moving,” were two of his best Cockney character songs, and he was almost the equal of Leybourne as the heavy man-about-town :

“This is about the style—ha-ha !
I think it’s just the style, ha-ha !
My taste excels the howling swell’s,
By jove, I’m just the style, ha-ha !”

His greatest success, however, was “The Chickaleary Bloke” :

“I’m a Chickaleary Bloke, with my one, two, three,
Vitechapel was the village I was born in ;
For to get me on the hop, or on my tibby drop,
You must wake up very early in the morning.
I’ve a rorty gal, also a knowing pal,
And merrily together we jog on,
I do not care a flatch, as long as I’ve a tatch,
Some pannum for my chest, and a tog on.”

This song took London by storm, and even occasioned grave words of disapproval from “Household Words,” regarding

the evil taste of the day. While making notes to write this chapter, I mentioned "The Great Vance" to an elderly friend. Nearly sixty years had elapsed since he had seen him, but unconsciously he broke out into the old familiar refrain :

"I'm a Chickaleary Bloke, with my one, two, three."

George Leybourne introduced a new character on the stage, the blasé, roaring swell, who spent his days and nights drinking champagne and dallying with fair ones. Leybourne was known as "The Lion Comique" and at one time attracted great attention by driving about in a flashy carriage and four. His first success was "The Dark Girl dressed in Blue," then came "Champagne Charlie" which fairly captured the town :

"A noise all night, in bed all day and swimming in Champagne,
For Champagne Charlie is my name.
Good for any game at night, my boys,
Who'll come and join me in a spree."

Leybourne was one of the best patterers of his day and more than once imperilled the licence of the hall in which he was singing by the extreme daring of his gags. "Mousetraps," "Up in a Balloon, Boys," "The Lancashire Lass," "The Flying Trapeze" were all huge hits of his, but perhaps none, with the exception of "Champagne Charlie," ever excelled "She danced like a Fairy"—which he sang in the character of a crestfallen dude and made all the more comic by the allusions to himself.

"She danced like a fairy and sang like a bird,
She did on my word ;
But rather absurd,
She doated on Leybourne, a man that you've heard,
And so she skedaddled from me."

CHAPTER XIII

THE FARRINGDON HOTEL

A Common Occurrence—The Sheriff's Officer—Sponging Houses—Procedure—The Fleet—Poor Side—Bartholomew Fair—Chummage—A Real Gentleman—The Unfortunate Legatee—Fate of the Carefree—The Courtyards—Rules of the Prison—Close of the Fleet—The Marshalsea—Lotus Eaters—The Queen's Bench—Insolvent Debtors' Court.

“**D**AMME ! A gentleman must expect reverses. What of that ? Here am I in the Fleet Prison. Well ! good. What then ? I'm none the worse for that, am I ? ” Thus spoke Mr. Smangle, voicing the feelings of a large class of society.

Debt and imprisonment for debt formed a distinct social feature of the life of the first half of the last century, judging from the prominence given to it in the literature of the time. It formed the point of endless jokes and supplied an unfailing theme alike for novelists and moralists. Imprisonment at the suit of a creditor was, indeed, an incident which might happen to any man in distress and, until the institution of the Court for Insolvent Debtors, might mean a life sentence. As Sam Weller put it, “ them as is always a idlin' in public-houses it don't damage at all, and them as is always vorkin' 'ven they can, it damages too much. ‘It's unekal,’ as my father used to say, ven his grog worn't made half and half. ‘It's unekal, and that's the fault on it.’ ”

It was not until 1869, the year before Dickens died, that the Debtors' Act abolished imprisonment for debt, that crying injustice against which he had declaimed through the whole of his literary life.

The first step in the debtor's gaolward career was arrest by the sheriff's officer or his representative. Each of the sheriffs of London and Westminster had an officer to whom he entrusted the seizure of debtors. In these officers' residences, commonly known as Sponging Houses, debtors were entertained, at their own expense, it may be observed, and

very much to their host's advantage and profit, pending the completion of the various legal processes attendant upon their committal to prison. One of the best known of the London sponging houses was Sloman's at No. 2 Cursitor Street, which has been described by several authors under various names. As Mr. Moss's it figures in "Vanity Fair," where the more aristocratic part of the establishment is seen :

"Mr. Moss's house, though somewhat dirty, was splendid throughout. There were dirty trays, and wine-coolers *en permanence* on the sideboard, huge dirty gilt cornices, with dingy yellow satin hangings to the barred windows which looked into Cursitor Street—vast and dirty gilt picture-frames surrounding pieces sporting and sacred, all of which works were by the greatest masters; and fetched the greatest prices, too, in the bill transactions in the course of which they were sold and bought over and over again. . . . Mrs. Moss's 'tably-dy-hoty' was served at the appointed hour of half-past five, when such of the gentlemen lodging in the house as could afford to pay for the banquet came and partook of it in the splendid front parlour where Miss Hem (as her papa called her) appeared without the curl-papers of the morning, and Mrs. Hem did the honours of a prime boiled leg of mutton and turnips. Asked whether he would 'stand' a bottle of champagne for the company Colonel Crawley consented, and the ladies drank to his 'ealth, and Mr. Moss, in the most polite manner, 'looked towards him.' "

Not all Mr. Sloman's guests, however, had the pleasure of entertainment at his private table. Some twenty years later than Colonel Crawley's visit, Mr. Watkins Tottle found himself detained for the sum of £33, 10s. 4d. at Mr. Solomon Jacobs's house, whither Gabriel Parsons went to his rescue.

" 'Upstairs, Sir,' said the boy, just opening the door wide enough to let Parsons in without squeezing him, and double-locking it the moment he had made his way through the aperture—'First floor—door on the left.' "

"Mr. Gabriel Parsons thus instructed, ascended the uncarpeted and ill-lighted staircase, and after giving several subdued taps at the before-mentioned 'door on the left,' which were rendered inaudible by the hum of voices within the room, and the hissing noise attendant on some frying

operations which were carrying on below-stairs, turned the handle, and entered the apartment.

“The room—which was a small, confined den—was partitioned off into boxes, like the common-room of some inferior eating-house. The dirty floor had evidently been as long a stranger to the scrubbing-brush as to carpet or floor-cloth : and the ceiling was completely blackened by the flare of the oil-lamp by which the room was lighted at night. The grey ashes on the edges of the tables, and the cigar-ends which were plentifully scattered about the dusty grate, fully accounted for the intolerable smell of tobacco which pervaded the place ; and the empty glasses and half-saturated slices of lemon on the tables, together with the porter beneath them, bore testimony to the frequent libations in which the individuals who honoured Mr. Solomon Jacobs by a temporary residence in his house indulged. Over the mantel-shelf was a paltry looking-glass, extending about half the width of the chimney-piece ; but by way of counterpoise, the ashes were confined by a rusty fender about twice as long as the hearth.

“From this cheerful room itself, the attention of Mr. Gabriel Parsons was naturally directed to its inmates. In one of the boxes two men were playing at cribbage with a very dirty pack of cards, some with blue, some with green, and some with red backs—selections from decayed packs. The cribbage-board had been long ago formed on the table by some ingenious visitor with the assistance of a pocket-knife and a two-pronged fork, with which the necessary number of holes had been made in the table at proper distances for the reception of the wooden pegs. In another box a stout, hearty-looking man, of about forty, was eating some dinner which his wife—an equally comfortable-looking personage—had brought him in a basket : and in a third, a genteel-looking young man was talking earnestly, and in a low tone, to a young female, whose face was concealed by a thick veil, but whom Mr. Gabriel Parsons immediately set down in his own mind as the debtor’s wife. A young fellow of vulgar manners, dressed in the very extreme of the prevailing fashion, was pacing up and down the room, with a lighted cigar in his mouth and his hands in his pockets, ever and anon puffing forth volumes of smoke, and occasionally applying, with much apparent relish, to a pint pot, the contents

of which were 'chilling' on the hob."—(Boz, *Tales, Tottle.*)

While detained at the house of the Sheriff's officer the debtor usually sent his last appeal to friends and relatives to raise the sum for which he was a defaulter; or he could remain there, at his own expense, of course, while making arrangements to pass through the Insolvent Debtors' Court. Should circumstances permit of no alternative but prison, however, detainers, *i.e.*, warrants to keep him in custody, were issued, a *habeas corpus* procured and in due course the unfortunate was conducted to one of the prisons for debtors.

Until 1842 there were four large debtors' prisons in London—the Fleet, Marshalsea, King's (or Queen's) Bench and Whitecross Street. The last, which was also the newest, dating only from 1813, belonged to the sheriffs of London and Middlesex and was the dread of debtors because of the severity with which it was run. "You can't go to Whitecross Street, my dear Sir," said Perker to Mr. Pickwick. "Impossible! There are sixty beds in a ward, and the bolt's on sixteen hours out of the twenty-four!" The building was demolished in 1870 and a tablet on the walls of a Midland Railway Goods Office now commemorates the site. The Fleet Prison in Farringdon Street was closed in 1842 and its inmates moved to the Queen's Bench Prison, whither, too, some seven years later, the debtors of the Marshalsea were taken. This united with its two brethren of evil memory, the Queen's Bench was rechristened the Queen's Prison and existed until 1869 when imprisonment for debt was abolished.

Most famous among debtors' prisons was undoubtedly the Fleet, around which a whole chapter of London history centres, though we are concerned only with the closing phases of its life.

The main building was a long four-storeyed barrack with a basement and had accommodation for at least 1000 prisoners. This building, known as the Master's Side, ran parallel with Farringdon Street, in which was the main entrance of the prison. Above the street doorway a large figure 9 enabled euphemistically-minded prisoners to give their address as "No. 9 Farringdon Street," when making appeals for relief.

There were two classes of prisoners in the Fleet, those who could pay for accommodation and small comforts in what

they called the Farringdon hotel, and those who could not and were obliged to go to the Poor or Common side.

“The poor side of a debtors’ prison, is, as its name imports, that in which the most miserable and abject class of debtors are confined. A prisoner having declared upon the poor side, pays neither rent nor chummage. His fees, upon entering and leaving the gaol, are reduced in amount, and he becomes entitled to a share of some small quantities of food : to provide which, a few charitable persons have, from time to time, left trifling legacies in their wills. Most of our readers will remember, that, until within a very few years past, there was a kind of iron cage in the wall of the Fleet Prison, within which was posted some man of hungry looks, who, from time to time, rattled a money-box, and exclaimed in a mournful voice, ‘Pray, remember the poor debtors ; pray, remember the poor debtors.’ The receipts of this box, when there were any, were divided among the poor prisoners ; and the men on the poor side relieved each other in this degrading office.

“Although this custom has been abolished, and the cage is now boarded up, the miserable and destitute condition of these unhappy persons remains the same. We no longer suffer them to appeal at the prison gates to the charity and compassion of the passers-by ; but we still leave unblotted in the leaves of our statute book, for the reverence and admiration of succeeding ages, the just and wholesome law which declares that the sturdy felon shall be fed and clothed, and that the penniless debtor shall be left to die of starvation and nakedness. This is no fiction. Not a week passes over our heads, but, in every one of our prisons for debt, some of these men must inevitably expire in the slow agonies of want, if they were not relieved by their fellow-prisoners.” *

In the Master’s Side a prisoner paid 1s. 3d. a week for the use of a room, but except in Bartholomew Fair, as the basement was called, he was subject to chummage, which meant having another prisoner billeted on him. The Bartholomew Fair quarters were dingy and miserable in the extreme :

“Oh,” replied Mr. Pickwick, looking down a dark and filthy staircase, which appeared to lead to a range of damp

* This extract and those on the following six pages are from *Pickwick*, Chapters xl-xlvii.

and gloomy stone vaults, beneath the ground, "and those, I suppose, are the little cellars where the prisoners keep their small quantities of coals. Unpleasant places to have to go down to ; but very convenient, I daresay."

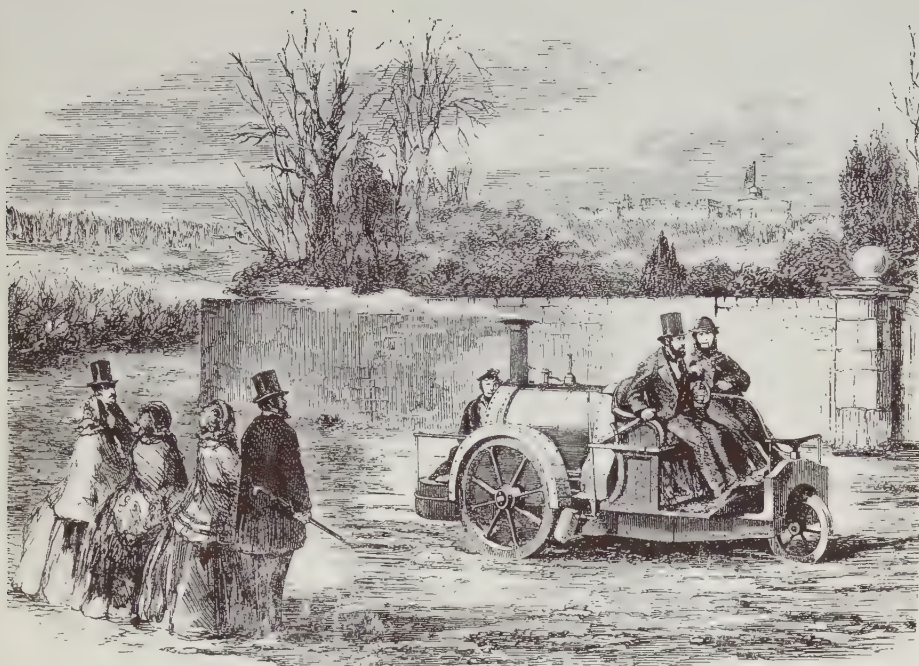
"Yes, I shouldn't wonder if they was convenient," replied the gentleman, "seeing that a few people live there, pretty snug. That's the Fair, that is."

"My friend," said Mr. Pickwick, "you don't really mean to say that human beings live down in those wretched dungeons ?"

"Live down there ! Yes, and die down there, too, wery often !" replied Mr. Roker ; "and what of that ? Who's got to say anything agin it ? Live down there ! Yes, and a wery good place it is to live in, ain't it ?"

Each of the other floors or galleries consisted of a long passage, running the whole length of the building, from which rooms opened out to right and left. The bottom gallery was known as the Hall, the second as the Coffee Room, the next as the Third and the last as the Top.

"It was getting dark ; that is to say, a few gas jets were kindled in this place which was never light, by way of compliment to the evening, which had set in outside. As it was rather warm, some of the tenants of the numerous little rooms which opened into the gallery on either hand, had set their doors ajar. Mr. Pickwick peeped into them as he passed along, with great curiosity and interest. Here four or five great hulking fellows, just visible through a cloud of tobacco-smoke, were engaged in noisy and riotous conversation over half-emptied pots of beer, or playing at all-fours with a very greasy pack of cards. In the adjoining room, some solitary tenant might be seen, poring, by the light of a feeble tallow candle, over a bundle of soiled and tattered papers, yellow with dust and dropping to pieces from age : writing, for the hundredth time, some lengthened statement of his grievances, for the perusal of some great man whose eyes it would never reach, or whose heart it would never touch. In a third, a man, with his wife and a whole crowd of children, might be seen making up a scanty bed on the ground, or upon a few chairs, for the younger ones to pass the night in. And in a fourth, and a fifth, and a sixth, and a seventh, the noise, and the beer, and the tobacco-smoke,



An early automobile, being a steam carriage, designed in 1860, for use on the turnpike roads



Instrument room of the Submarine Telegraph Company, Cornhill, who first established telegraphic communication with France in 1852

SMALL BEGINNINGS OF GREAT INVENTIONS

and the cards, all came over again in greater force than before.

“In the galleries themselves, and more especially on the staircases, there lingered a great number of people, who came there, some because their rooms were empty and lonesome, others because their rooms were full and hot: the greater part because they were restless and uncomfortable, and not possessed of the secret of exactly knowing what to do with themselves. There were many classes of people here, from the labouring man in his fustian jacket, to the broken-down spendthrift in his shawl dressing-gown, most appropriately out at elbows; but there was the same air about them all—a listless jail-bird careless swagger, a vagabondish who’s-afraid sort of bearing, which is wholly indescribable in words, but which any man can understand in one moment if he wish, by setting foot in the nearest debtors’ prison, and looking at the very first group of people he sees there, with the same interest as Mr. Pickwick did.”

A certain number of rooms belonged by right to prisoners who had spent five years or more in the gaol. They were entitled to let these apartments for what they could get, twenty shillings a week being considered a reasonable figure. Other rooms were the perquisites of prison officials, who turned them to good account. Prisoners could, if they cared to do so, take in as many lodgers as the floor would hold, and it was no uncommon thing for old inhabitants to make hundreds of pounds by letting portions of their miserable chambers for sums varying from five to ten shillings a week.

The question of chummage was easily got over. An occupant of one of the upper rooms who had a new prisoner chummed on him could get rid of the intruder by paying him anything from 2s. 6d. to 5s. a week according to the fullness of the prison and his chance of finding accommodation elsewhere:

“Mr. Pickwick had been eyeing the room, which was filthily dirty, and smelt intolerably close. There was no vestige of either carpet, curtain, or blind. There was not even a closet in it. Unquestionably there were but few things to put away, if there had been one; but, however few in number, or small in individual amount, still, remnants of loaves and pieces of cheese, and damp towels, and scraggs

of meat, and articles of wearing apparel, and mutilated crockery, and bellows without nozzles, and toasting-forks without prongs, *do* present somewhat of an uncomfortable appearance when they are scattered about the floor of a small apartment, which is the common sitting and sleeping room of three idle men.

“ ‘I suppose this can be managed somehow,’ said the butcher, after a pretty long silence. ‘What will you take to go out?’

“ ‘I beg your pardon,’ replied Mr. Pickwick. ‘What did you say? I hardly understand you.’

“ ‘What will you take to be paid out?’ said the butcher. ‘The regular chummage is two-and-six. Will you take three bob?’

“ ‘—And a bender,’ suggested the clerical gentleman.

“ ‘Well, I don’t mind that; it’s only twopence a-piece more,’ said Mr. Martin.

“ ‘What do you say, now? We’ll pay you out for three-and-sixpence a week. Come!’

“ ‘And stand a gallon of beer down,’ chimed in Mr. Simpson. ‘There!’

“ ‘And drink it on the spot,’ said the chaplain. ‘Now!’

“ ‘I really am so wholly ignorant of the rules of this place,’ returned Mr. Pickwick, ‘that I do not yet comprehend you. *Can* I live anywhere else? I thought I could not.’

“ ‘*Can* you!’ repeated Mr. Martin, with a smile of pity.

“ ‘Well, if I knew as little of life as that, I’d eat my hat and swallow the buckle whole,’ said the clerical gentleman.

“ ‘So would I,’ added the sporting one, solemnly.

“After this introductory preface, the three chums informed Mr. Pickwick, in a breath, that money was, in the Fleet, just what money was out of it; that it would instantly procure him almost anything he desired; and that, supposing he had it, and had no objection to spend it, if he only signified his wish to have a room to himself, he might take possession of one, furnished and fitted to boot, in half an hour’s time.”

It can readily be imagined that life under such circumstances was likely to become a vagabondish, reckless affair. Many prisoners had found their way to the Fleet through extravagance and dissoluteness. In its precincts flourished

such parasites of society as Mr. Smangle, one of Mr. Roker's real gentlemen, who "takes his twelve pints of ale a day and never leaves off smoking, even at meals."

" 'Ah,' said Mr. Smangle, 'paper has been my ruin.'

" 'A stationer, I presume, sir?' said Mr. Pickwick, innocently.

" 'Stationer! No, no; confound and curse me! Not so low as that. No trade. When I say paper, I mean bills.'

" 'Oh, you use the word in that sense. I see,' said Mr. Pickwick.

" 'Damme! A gentleman must expect reverses,' said Smangle. 'What of that? Here am I in the Fleet Prison. Well; good. What then? I'm none the worse for that, am I?'

" 'Not a bit,' replied Mr. Mivins. And he was quite right; for, so far from Mr. Smangle being any the worse for it, he was something the better, inasmuch as to qualify himself for the place, he had attained gratuitous possession of certain articles of jewellery, which, long before that, had found their way to the pawnbroker's."

The Fleet Prison was undoubtedly the best place for such gentry but there were others caught in the system upon whom it pressed shamefully hard.

" 'I was ruined by having money left me,' said the cobbler. 'An old gentleman that I worked for, down in the country, and a humble relation of whose I married—she's dead, God bless her, and thank Him for it!—was seized with a fit and went off' . . .

" 'And being surrounded by a great number of nieces and nevys, as was always a-quarrelling and fighting among themselves for the property, he makes me his executor, and leaves the rest to me: in trust, to divide it among 'em as the will provided.'

" 'Well, when I was going to take out a probate of the will, the nieces and nevys, who was desperately disappointed at not getting all the money, enters a caveat against it. But, finding that they couldn't agree among themselves, and consequently couldn't get up a case against the will, they withdrew the caveat, and I paid all the legacies. I'd hardly done it, when one nevy brings an action to set the will aside. The case comes on, some months afterwards, afore a deaf old

gentleman, in a back room somewhere down by Paul's Churchyard ; and arter four counsels had taken a day a-piece to bother him regularly, he takes a week or two to consider, and read the evidence in six vollums, and then gives his judgment that how the testator was not quite right in his head, and I must pay all the money back again, and all the costs. I appealed ; the case come on before three or four very sleepy gentlemen, who had heard it all before in the other court, where they're lawyers without work ; the only difference being, that, there, they're called doctors, and in the other place delegates, if you understand that ; and they very dutifully confirmed the decision of the old gentleman below. After that, we went into Chancery, where we are still, and where I shall always be. My lawyers have had all my thousand pound long ago ; and what between the estate, as they call it, and the costs, I'm here for ten thousand, and shall stop here, till I die, mending shoes.' "

A third class, not so numerous, perhaps as the others, was composed of the genial, amiable, ne'er-do-wells who found their way to debtors' prisons through sheer carelessness and providence—men like Captain Shandon :

" Nothing ever seemed to disturb the sweetness of his temper : not debts : not duns : not misery : not the bottle : not his wife's unhappy position, or his children's ruined chances. He was perfectly fond of wife and children after his fashion : he always had the kindest words and smiles for them, and ruined them with the utmost sweetness of temper. He never could refuse himself or any man any enjoyment which his money could purchase ; he would share his last guinea with Jack and Tom, and we may be sure he had a score of such retainers. He would sign his name at the back of any man's bill, and never pay any debt of his own."—(*Pendennis*, 32.)

Finally there were the victims of circumstances who, like Mr. Dorrit, heard the gate close upon them with never a notion of how it all came about :

" The affairs of this debtor were perplexed by a partnership of which he knew no more than that he had invested money in it ; by legal matters of assignment and settlement, conveyance here and conveyance there, suspicion of unlawful preference of creditors in this direction, and of mysterious

spiriting away of property in that ; and as nobody on the face of the earth could be more incapable of explaining any single item in the heap of confusion than the debtor himself, nothing comprehensible could be made of his case. To question him in detail, and endeavour to reconcile his answers ; to closet him with accountants and sharp practitioners, learned in the wiles of insolvency and bankruptcy ; was only to put the case out at compound interest in incomprehensibility. The irresolute fingers fluttered more and more ineffectually about the trembling lip on every such occasion, and the sharpest practitioners gave him up as a hopeless job."

However they got there, the inmates in the Fleet—and other debtors' prisons, except Whitecross Street, found the time hang heavily enough on their hands. A certain number were kept busy writing appeals or carrying on mysterious negotiations to raise money for their release. Others, who had few hopes of ever getting out, settled down to a life of despair or carelessness, according to their temperament, fetching in their wives and families to share the discomforts and privations of gaol life.

Within the containing walls of the Fleet were two courtyards. To the left of the lodge was the Painted Ground, so called from crude drawings of ships and other objects emblazoned by some imprisoned artist on the walls which separated it from Farringdon Street. At the back of the main building was the Racket Ground where all day long young and indifferent debtors spent hours in playing that game, skittles, or others of a soothing and time-passing tendency. In fine weather this courtyard was the general assembly place where prisoners met their guests or transacted such business as they had to do.

"The noise and the crowd, the life and the shouting, the shabby bustle of the place, struck and excited Pen. People moved about ceaselessly and restless, like caged animals in a menagerie. Men were playing at fives. Others were pacing and tramping : this one in colloquy with his lawyer in dingy black—that one walking sadly, with his wife by his side, and a child on his arm. Some were arrayed in tattered dressing-gowns, and had a look of rakish fashion. Everybody seemed to be busy, humming, and on the move."—*(Pendennis, 32.)*

The Fleet and the Queen's Bench were the only prisons in London enjoying the privilege of having Rules, that is a certain area in the vicinity of the prison, but outside its walls, where prisoners were allowed to live on payment of certain fees to the Warden of the prison. Those who dwelt within the Rules were obliged to find sureties for their presenting themselves when called upon, as well as for their keeping within the prescribed boundaries. To secure the privilege they had to pay a varying percentage on the amount of the debt for which they were imprisoned. In Term Time they were allowed to attend the Courts and go wherever business connected with their financial difficulties might demand their presence.

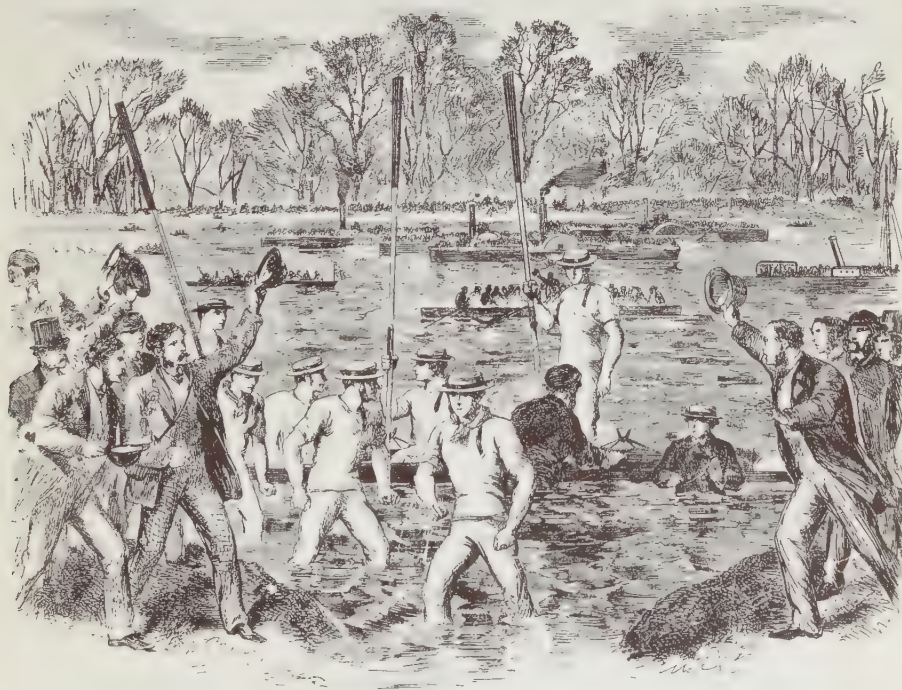
The Rules of the Fleet included the parishes of St. Bride and St. Martin and were roughly enclosed by a line up Ludgate Hill, along Old Bailey, down Snow Hill and along Farringdon Street. Owing to the many abuses of this privilege, if privilege it may be called, the whole system of Rules was abolished in 1835 after which year all prisoners were actually immured within the gaol itself.

By the early '40s the Fleet and other debtors' prisons were beginning to empty. There were some 400 defaulters in Whitecross Street, 200 in the Queen's Bench, and only 85 in the Fleet where discipline had grown very lax. Drunkenness and disorder became so common in both the Bench and the Fleet that an order was made forbidding the Coffee-room to serve any prisoners with more than a pint of wine a day. Liquor was smuggled in from outside, however, and disgraceful scenes continued to take place.

In 1842 it was decided to close the Fleet and transfer the inmates to the Queen's Bench Prison. This decision caused much consternation and agitation among the inmates who held indignation meetings and published appeals to the Chancellor and others with whom the decision rested. The removal duly took place, however, and two years later the whole site was sold to the City Corporation for £25,000. In 1846 the building was pulled down and the material sold, and twenty years later the London, Chatham and Dover Railway bought the whole site for the line they were carrying through to Holborn. In 1874 the Farringdon Memorial Hall was built upon part of the Fleet site and all



Cricket Match at Lord's, July 1842, to test the relative merits of the fast and slow bowling systems. The fast bowlers won by 115 to 89



Finish of the 'Varsity Boat Race of 1863. Oxford won, but their boat had made so much water that she was sinking at Mortlake, and the crew had to wade ashore

memory of what Timbs called the "pest of a prison" disappeared.

The Marshalsea survived the Fleet for seven years and portions of the actual building are still (1925) extant. The wall, marked with a tablet, can be seen in the churchyard of St. George's, Southwark, while anyone venturing up Angel Court, can trace portions of the prison courtyard.

This building was the second Marshalsea, the whole institution having been moved in 1811 farther up the Borough High Street from opposite Union Street :

"There stood, a few doors short of the church of Saint George, in the borough of Southwark, on the left-hand side of the way going southward, the Marshalsea Prison. It had stood there many years before, and it remained there some years afterwards ; but it is gone now, and the world is none the worse without it.

"It was an oblong pile of barrack building, partitioned into squalid houses standing back to back, so that there were no back-rooms ; environed by a narrow paved yard, hemmed in by high walls duly spiked at top. Itself a close and confined prison for debtors, it contained within it a much closer and more confined gaol for smugglers. Offenders against the revenue laws, and defaulters to excise or customs, who had incurred fines which they were unable to pay, were supposed to be incarcerated behind an iron-plated door, closing up a second prison, consisting of a strong cell or two, and a blind alley some yard and a half wide, which formed the mysterious termination of the very limited skittle-ground in which the Marshalsea debtors bowled down their troubles.

"Supposed to be incarcerated there, because the time had rather outgrown the strong cells and the blind alley. In practice they had come to be considered a little too bad, though in theory they were quite as good as ever ; which may be observed to be the case at the present day with other cells that are not at all strong, and with other blind alleys that are stone-blind. Hence the smugglers habitually consorted with the debtors (who received them with open arms), except at certain constitutional moments when somebody came from some Office, to go through some form of overlooking something, which neither he nor anybody else knew anything about. On those truly British occasions, the smugglers, if any, made

a feint of walking into the strong cells and the blind alley, while this somebody pretended to do his something ; and made a reality of walking out again as soon as he hadn't done it—neatly epitomising the administration of most of the public affairs in our right little, tight little island.”—(*Little Dorrit*, 6.)

Whatever its minor difference may have been, the Marshalsea was like the Fleet, like the Queen's Bench—a debtors' prison with the same debtors passing through the same gamut of hope, despair and indifference :

“ ‘Bah, bah, sir,’ said Dr. Haggage, ‘what does it signify ? A little more elbow-room is all we want here. We are quiet here ; we don't get badgered here ; there's no knocker here, sir, to be hammered at by creditors and bring a man's heart into his mouth. Nobody comes here to ask if a man's at home, and to say he'll stand on the door-mat till he is. Nobody writes threatening letters about money, to this place. It's freedom, sir, it's freedom ! I have had to-day's practice at home and abroad, on a march, and aboard ship, and I'll tell you this : I don't know that I have ever pursued it under such quiet circumstances, as here this day. Elsewhere, people are restless, worried, hurried about, anxious respecting one thing, anxious respecting another. Nothing of the kind here, sir. We have done all that—we know the worst of it ; we have got to the bottom, we can't fall, and what have we found ? Peace. That's the word for it. Peace.’ With this profession of faith, the doctor, who was an old gaol-bird, and was more sodden than usual, and had the additional and unusual stimulus of money in his pocket, returned to his associate and chum in hoarseness, puffiness, red-facedness, all-fours, tobacco, dirt and brandy.”

The Queen's Bench, later known as the Queen's, was the last debtors' prison to be used. It stood at the junction of Newington Causeway and Borough Road on the site now occupied by a large block of workmen's flats commemorating it as Queen's Buildings.

The Queen's Bench contained some 224 rooms, arranged rather better than the accommodation at either the Marshalsea or the Fleet. Prisoners were divided into two classes, ordinary debtors and those who had been committed for fraud or defiance of creditors, each class being subdivided into those who did or did not pay for themselves. Like the

Fleet, the Bench permitted prisoners to live in Rules. The fees, which averaged much the same as those of the Fleet, brought the Marshal of the Prison some £3000 a year.

The only hope of the destitute prisoner was to pass through the Insolvent Debtors' Court, which was held at 33 Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. This Court had been established as an act of mercy towards debtors whose case was desperate and who stood no chance of clearing themselves. Applicants for relief were allowed to have no more than £20 worth of personal belongings and detaining creditors were able to oppose their applications. As a child Dickens had intimate experience of the operations of the laws concerning debtors and, when his father was in the King's Bench, had himself, then a child of ten or thereabouts, to prove his personal belongings to be beneath the schedule amount. It was this knowledge which enabled him to draw the unflattering, though accurate, picture of the Court and its attorneys.

"In a lofty room, ill-lighted and worse ventilated, situate in Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, there sit nearly the whole year round, one, two, three, or four gentlemen in wigs, as the case may be, with little writing desks before them, constructed after the fashion of those used by the judges of the land, barring the French polish. There is a box of barristers on their right hand; there is an inclosure of insolvent debtors on their left; and there is an inclined plane of most especially dirty faces in their front. These gentlemen are the Commissioners of the insolvent Court, and the place in which they sit, is the Insolvent Court itself.

"A casual visitor might suppose this place to be a Temple dedicated to the Genius of Seediness. There is not a messenger or process-server attached to it, who wears a coat that was made for him; not a tolerably fresh, or wholesome-looking man in the whole establishment, except a little white-headed apple-faced tipstaff, and even he, like an ill-conditioned cherry preserved in brandy, seems to have artificially dried and withered up into a state of preservation to which he can lay no natural claim. The very barristers' wigs are ill-powdered, and their curls lack crispness.

"But the attorneys, who sit at a large bare table below the Commissioners, are, after all, the greatest curiosities. The professional establishment of the more opulent of these

gentlemen, consists of a blue bag and a boy : generally a youth of the Jewish persuasion. They have no fixed offices, their legal business being transacted in the parlours of public-houses, or the yards of prisons : whither they repair in crowds, and canvass for customers after the manner of omnibus cads. They are of a greasy and mildewed appearance ; and if they can be said to have any vices at all, perhaps drinking and cheating are the most conspicuous among them. Their residences are usually on the outskirts of ' the Rules,' chiefly lying within a circle of one mile from the obelisk in St. George's Fields. Their looks are not prepossessing, and their manners are peculiar."—(*Pickwick*, 43.)

The whole system of imprisonment for debt was practically killed by Dickens. Other writers had gibed at it or had condemned it with a fiercer rhetoric, but Dickens simply exhibited it as it stood, in all its horror. The exposure of prison life made in *Pickwick Papers* was renewed and intensified in *Little Dorrit* and these two books, summing up the whole indictment against the system gave it a mortal blow, though it was not until 1869 that imprisonment for debt was abolished and the debtors' prisons with their misery, profligacy and evil tuition, became things of the past.

CHAPTER XIV

STEAM TRAVEL BY LAND AND SEA

The First Railway—Prejudices—Foolish Opposition—Last Day for Specifications—The Opening Ceremony—Navvies—The Two Gauges—Comfort and Discomfort—A Train arrives at Euston—The Journey to Manchester—Refreshment Rooms—The Queen's First Journey—Steamers—The "Great Western"—Cunard Line—The "Great Eastern"—Overland Route—Telegraphs.

THE railway from Liverpool to Manchester was opened on 15th September 1830, amid immense enthusiasm and excitement, only marred by the fatal accident to Mr. Huskisson; but the era of railway travel did not begin in earnest for another ten years, during which time surveys for some of the principal lines were made. These were not achieved, however, without strongly organised opposition from many vested interests, fortified by ignorance and incredulity, and the public was solemnly warned of the ruin that would overwhelm the country if the mad projects were ever carried out.

The whole railway scheme was portentously declared to be "a monopoly the most secure, the most lasting, the most injurious that can be conceived" while the projectors and directors of new lines were labelled as "men induced by no motive to action but their own selfishness, swayed by every gust of prejudice and passion, and too often as profoundly ignorant of even their own interests, as they are exclusively devoted to their own advancement." It was averred by doctors that the gloom of tunnels and the noise of roaring wheels would injure passengers' health, while the dust and ashes would ruin their eyesight. Men who might have known better declared that a rate of twelve or fifteen miles an hour was a nonsensical ideal, that a head wind would either extinguish the fire or make it so furious that the boiler would blow up.

Opposition was not confined to mere denunciation in newspapers or speeches by demagogues. Considerable exer-

tions were made to thwart the progress of the schemes. Northampton, for example, refused to allow the London and Birmingham Railway to approach within a considerable distance of the town for fear that the smoke of the engines would affect the wool of the sheep for which these ingenious boot manufacturers developed a solicitude and interest. Equally frivolous objections were made by numbers of smaller towns and villages, so passengers who nowadays find themselves deposited a mile or so from the town they wish to visit, may thank the authorities of the '30s and early '40s for this inconvenience.

But the manifest advantages of railways could not long be concealed or lied away. Wherever the lines touched, farmers and business men alike reaped advantage and benefit and by the mid '40s opposition had practically ceased. In 1844, indeed, the tendency was all the other way and a Railway mania set in. Capital was raised and lines projected that could not possibly pay, even if they could ever be built, and in that year alone over 150 new prospectuses were brought before the public. A Railway Commission was instituted by Government to look after the interest of the public. One of its recommendations, which became law, was that every railway should arrange for at least one train to pass each way, the whole length of every line, every week-day, at an average speed of twelve miles per hour, stopping at every station, furnished with covered-in third-class railway coaches, and charging a fare not exceeding a penny a mile. This was called the Parliamentary train.

The Railway mania increased in seriousness, reaching its climax in the Spring and Summer of 1845. The public rushed forward with its money, indifferent to the possibilities or probabilities of the innumerable projected lines, scarcely waiting, even, to take a receipt for the notes and gold they thrust into the hands of railway sharks. In one month 352 lines were projected, entailing a capital of £332,000,000 ! All classes were bitten with a craze to gamble ; parsons, widows, tradesmen, butlers ; " every man in the present day," according to Cruikshank, " is a holder of shares in a railway ; that is, he has got some pieces of paper called scrip, entitling him to a certain proportionate part of a blue, red or yellow line drawn across a map and designated a railway. If the

coloured scratch runs South to North it is generally termed a Trunk line, if it 'turns about and wheels about' in all directions leading to nowhere on its own account, but interfering with every railway that does, ten to one but it is a Grand Junction."

The Board of Trade named the midnight of Sunday, November 30th, as the latest time by which plans of proposed railways would have to be deposited with them. This created a rather curious situation, for there was not nearly enough skilled labour available in surveying, plotting and draughting plans. Trained men flocked to the hastily-arranged offices from all parts of the country—even from the Continent—and many who had but a smattering of how to use a compass or draw to scale were taken on at ridiculously high wages and set to work, night and day, getting out the plans.

Anxiety and excitement grew tense as the time approached and almost incredible exertions were made to get the plans up to London from the provinces before the fateful closing hour. Post-horses were at a premium; some railways deliberately side-tracked trains in which prospectors with rival schemes were travelling. By Sunday, the entrance hall to the Board of Trade offices was full to overflowing with parcels of maps and specifications, while carriages were whirling up every moment with fresh bundles. At last midnight struck and with some difficulty the doors were closed. Hardly had this happened when a post-chaise dashed up with steaming horses and the three occupants in a frenzy of rage and chagrin! In reply to their clamorous knocking, a Police Inspector peeped out to say that they were too late. One of the men seized the opportunity of the open door to toss in some bundles of plans which smashed the lamp to pieces as they hurtled through the air. The plans were thrown back, only to be returned by the perspective and the volley was kept up for some time to the intense delight of the onlookers.

There were many railway schemes which never got so far as the Board of Trade; that had, indeed, only come into existence for the sake of fleecing a gullible public, and before long, ruin and loss overtook thousands of dupes. George Hudson, the Railway King, of whom I have spoken elsewhere was one of the dominating figures of this mad epoch. He made a fortune out of the mania and lost it, and though he

was no worse than many of the railway rogues and infinitely better than most, his wealth and influence made him the whipping boy for infuriated and ruined spectators.

The actual survey of the route to be followed by a proposed line was often attended with considerable excitement. Many landowners were so hostile that the surveyors were obliged to protect themselves with a bodyguard of navvies, doubly inspired for their task by quantities of liquor and the knowledge that months of regular, well-paid work depended on the survey being carried through. One landowner was so persistent in his refusal to allow surveyors to cross his property that the work was done at night by means of coloured lamps ; another irate gentleman insisted on standing in front of the surveyor's theodolite and had to be removed by main force ! A truculent rector, whose fields lay in the path of the proposed track was circumvented by the surveyors hustling through their work one Sunday morning while he was at church, the last angles being obtained just as he hurried through the Benediction. On more than one occasion even firearms were resorted to, though with no fatal result.

The survey having been made and approved and a bill having duly made its way through Parliament, the ceremony of cutting the first turf had to be arranged. The services of some distinguished person, a duke or duchess for preference, were usually enlisted ; a marquee was erected near the spot ; directors, local gentry, school children, and rural bands were marshalled and the ceremony was performed to the roar of cannon and the cheers of enthusiastic multitudes.

This sudden outburst of railway building gave employment to tens of thousands of labourers. Men from the fens of Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire, accustomed to building embankments, were the first to be employed, but it was not long before labour was got from every village in England. A rare collection of men it was, too. Reckless and daring, often glad to get away from their own villages, which poaching or other misdemeanours had made too hot for them, they travelled in droves from one end of England to the other, as soon as one line was finished finding employment on another. They were often housed in rough, temporary sheds, and for long the countryside was terror-stricken at the gangs of wild, drunken ruffians who swept over peaceful, rural spots like a

breath from Hell. When pay-day arrived on the Lancaster-Carlisle line, a regiment of infantry and a troop of cavalry had to be kept in readiness to quell the drunken orgies and riots that were bound to ensue.

Most of the English lines were laid with the usually accepted gauge of four feet eight and a half inches which had been adopted by the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. But Isambard Brunel, engineer to the Great Western Line, had his own theories of a broad gauge of seven feet and carried this through in opposition to Stephenson's ideas, thereby causing immense inconvenience to passengers and great delay in dealing with luggage and other goods. Passengers changing from the Great Western to other lines, as at Oxford or Gloucester, had a wild and furious scramble from one train to another; luggage was tossed about, fragile articles were broken and the utmost confusion engendered. A whole hour was wasted with each truck at Gloucester, while the contents were being transferred from broad gauge to narrow gauge, or vice versa! The line was laid, however, and it was not until many years later that the Great Western adopted the universal gauge.

In those early days railway travelling and trains in general formed matter for endless jokes, grumbles and conjectures among travellers. Seated in their carriages well in advance of the time for departure, passengers would gravely discuss the probabilities of arriving at their destination without mishap, while the more frivolous would express mock anxiety at having to sit with their backs to the horses, and hope the poor beasts were being given a good feed of coke!

Railway terms were adapted as far as possible from the old coaching system. "Booking office," "guard," "driver," "coach" were all incorporated in the new institution, and the vehicles themselves were at first designed on the lines of a stage-coach, with the rounded doors, small windows, and luggage strapped to the roof.

First-class carriages were moderately comfortable, fitted with black leather cushions and furnished with rugs for use in winter weather. Second-class compartments had plain, wooden seats—how hard, only one who had been jolted on them for hours on end, could forcibly describe! But they had at least a roof and sides, which all the third-class coaches

had not. It is, indeed, difficult to imagine the discomfort of travelling in those old third-class trucks which were far worse than those now assigned to cattle. It was bad enough in summer what with the dust and smuts, but in foul weather the wretchedness was impossible to describe. There was no way of dodging the rain in open trucks, it searched and beat through the stoutest garment, and third-class passengers were not often blessed with particularly stout clothing. At first they were not even allowed seats, but that concession was made later. Luckily for those going long journeys the daily Parliamentary was obliged by law to have covered third-class coaches, but it was a wearisome, tedious journey where one was obliged to sit bolt upright in a stuffy carriage with an opening on either side some bare eighteen inches square, dignified by the name of a window.

Five minutes before a train started a bell rang loudly in the station. Passengers scrambled into their carriages at this sound, porters hustled the last luggage into the vans and gave a parting glance to see that all boxes strapped on the roof were securely fastened. Then, as the critical moment of departure arrived, the guards at the front and rear of the train, waved white flags to one another and the stationmaster, watch in hand, awaited the precise second before waving his flag which signalled the driver to proceed.

The arrival of a train at Euston was accompanied by an imposing ritual. From Camden Station, the original terminus of the London and Birmingham Railway, a steep gradient descended to the new station in Euston Square. As soon as the incoming train entered Primrose Hill Tunnel a bell rang loudly in Camden station, whereupon a policeman rushed to a pneumatic tube and turned a handle which caused a whistle to blow on the platform at Euston. Near this whistle was stationed another policeman, and at the first blast it was his duty to snatch a bell rope and boom forth a warning to the whole station.

Tickets were collected at Camden while the engine was unhooked, shunted to a siding by a policeman, and sent to the rear of the train. When all tickets had been collected—and a fine distinction was made between the various classes in the civility shown by the officials, for third-class passengers were considered too contemptible to be accorded even a show



Lively times in the Third Class trucks



The fight for seats in the Second Class



First Class for gentility and comfort

of politeness—the engine gave the train a mighty shove and sent it trundling down the gradient to Euston under its own impetus.

Policemen had a lot to do with the running of those early railways. They were practically in charge of all signals and were responsible for everything being carried out for the safety and well-being of passengers. Constables were placed along the track and at stations to regulate the traffic of the line. When the way was clear the policeman stood erect, flag in hand, making no signal whatever. A white flag signified all clear; waving a green flag was cautionary; red meant “stop at once.” The mechanical signals, also worked by police, were usually small discs, placed edgewise when the line was clear. Lamps, of course, provided signals at night.

This rather primitive method of signalling was not calculated to avert the possibility of accidents. Disasters of all sorts occurred on every line, though the Eastern Counties, later known as the Great Eastern, held about the worst record. In the early '50s “Punch” recommended that the safety of passengers might be better ensured by every engine having one of the board of directors strapped between the buffers, and suggested that a travelling surgery should be coupled to every train. In future, it asserted, nursery rhymes might well be adapted to the changed conditions of life:

AIR.—“*Ride a Cock-Horse.*”

“Fly by steam-force the country across,
Faster than jockey outside a race-horse:
With time-bills mismanaged, fast trains after slow,
You shall have danger wherever you go.”

AIR.—“*Little Bo-Peep.*”

“Little Bo-peep
Is fast asleep,
In th' Excursion train you'll find him:
Oh! it's ten to one
If he ever gets home—
For a 'Special' is close behind him!”

AIR.—“*Hush-a-by Baby.*”

“Rock away, passenger, in the third class,
When your train shunts a faster will pass;
When your train's late your chances are small—
Crushed will be carriages, engine, and all.”

AIR.—“*Dickory, Dickory, Dock.*”

“Smashery, mashery, crash !
 Into the ‘Goods’ we dash :
 The ‘Express,’ we find,
 Is just behind—
 Smashery, mashery, crash !”

A trip to Manchester by the Parliamentary in the late '40s meant leaving Euston soon after six in the morning. On arrival at Blisworth, the train stopped for an hour and a half to allow fast traffic to clear the station, and incidentally to give passengers a chance to warm themselves and get a little breakfast. Half hour stops were usually made at Birmingham and Derby, and with luck the traveller reached Manchester late in the evening.

Many and unceasing were passengers' complaints about the meals served at refreshment rooms *en route*, where blisteringly hot soup, served just as the departure bell was ringing, or inedible sandwiches and mysterious substances passed off as ham, formed the staple fare—

“I am the boy at what is called the Refreshment Room at Mugby Junction, and what's proudest boast is, that it never yet refreshed a mortal being. Up in a corner of the Down Refreshment Room at Mugby Junction, in the height of twenty-seven cross draughts (I've often counted 'em while they brush the First-Class hair twenty-seven ways), behind the bottles, among the glasses, bounded on the nor'-west by the beer, stood pretty far to the right of a metallic object that's at times the tea-urn and at times the soup-tureen, according to the nature of the last twang imparted to its contents which are the same groundwork, fended off from the traveller by a barrier of stale sponge-cakes erected atop of the counter, and lastly exposed sideways to the glare of Our Missis's eye—you ask a Boy so sitiwated, next time you stop in a hurry at Mugby, for anything to drink ; you take particular notice that he'll try to seem not to hear you, that he'll appear in a absent manner to survey the Line through a transparent medium composed of your head and body, and that he won't serve you as long as you can possibly bear it. That's me.

“You should see our Bandolining Room at Mugby

Junction. It's led to by the door behind the counter, which you'll notice usually stands ajar, and it's the room where Our Missis and our young ladies Bandolines their hair. You should see 'em at it, betwixt trains, Bandolining away, as if they was anointing themselves for the combat. When you're telegraphed, you should see their noses all a-going up with scorn, as if it was a part of the working of the same Cooke and Wheatstone electrical machinery. You should hear Our Missis give the word, 'Here comes the Beast to be Fed!' and then you should see 'em indignantly skipping across the Line, from the Up to the Down, or Wicer Warsaw and begin to pitch the stale pastry into the plates and chuck the sawdust sangwiches under the glass covers, and get out the—ha, ha, ha!—the sherry—O, my eye, my eye! for your Refreshment."

The Metropolitan Railway was begun amid much ridicule as being a scheme to make Londoners travel along the sewers, and the line from Paddington to Farringdon Street was opened in January 1863. Its popularity was immense, in the first year of this short line's existence it carried 9,500,000 passengers! During the following years it was extended by degrees until the complete circle was made. Many of us can still remember the smoky, breathless atmosphere of the steam-driven Underground.

On Monday, June 13th, 1842, the Queen made her first railway journey from Slough to Paddington, and expressed herself "quite charmed with it!" According to a newspaper:

"On Monday her Majesty the Queen, for the first time, returned from her sojourn at Windsor Castle, accompanied by her illustrious consort, Prince Albert, Count Mensdorf, &c., by way of the Great Western Railway. The intention of Her Majesty to return to town by railroad was first intimated to the authorities at Paddington on Saturday afternoon, and in consequence preparations on an extensive scale were ordered to be made for the transit of the Royal pair from Slough to the Paddington terminus, which were carried into effect with the greatest secrecy. Immediately after the departure of the day mail-train from Paddington at a quarter past ten o'clock, the Royal train, consisting of the Phlegethon engine and tender, drawing the Royal saloon in the centre of two Royal saloon carriages, preceded by a second-class carriage, and followed by three carriage-trucks, started from the ter-

minus at Paddington for Slough, which station they reached shortly before eleven o'clock. Previous to the departure from Paddington, the Royal saloon, the fittings of which are upon a most elegant and magnificent scale, was tastefully improved by bouquets of rare flowers arranged within the carriage. At Slough, the Royal party on their arrival at the station a few minutes before twelve o'clock, in six carriages, were received by Mr. C. Russell, the chairman, and conducted to the splendid apartments at the station designed for the reception of royalty. Her Majesty, however, during the delay necessarily occasioned by the placing the carriages of the attendants on the trucks, &c., proceeded to the line, and examined the Royal Saloon, inquiring very minutely into the whole of the arrangements, and precisely at twelve o'clock the train left Slough for Paddington, Mr. Gooch, the principal of the locomotive department, accompanied by Mr. Brunel, the engineer, driving the engine.

"Before twelve o'clock large numbers of elegantly-dressed ladies, consisting of the families and friends of the directors and officers of the company, were ranged on each side of the part apportioned for the arrival of the royal train. Precisely at twenty-five minutes past twelve o'clock the royal special train entered the Paddington terminus, having performed the distance in twenty-five minutes, and on her Majesty alighting she was received with the most deafening demonstrations of loyalty and affection we have ever experienced. His Royal Highness Prince Albert alighted first. Her Majesty on being handed out of the royal saloon, in a most condescending manner returned the congratulations of the assemblage present."

This aroused some alarm in the public mind and the *Atlas* newspaper wrote :

"We are aware that every precaution is taken by the directors and managers of the Great Western Railway, when Her Majesty makes use of a special train, and we are not less acquainted with the courage and absence from all fear from the mind of the Queen. But a long regency in this country would be so fearful and tremendous an evil, that we cannot but desire, in common with many others, that these Royal railway excursions should be, if possible, either wholly abandoned or only occasionally resorted to."

The early Victorian years gave birth to the steamship traffic which is now an integral part of modern life. On April the 8th, 1836, the "Great Western," a new and specially built steamer of 1321 tons, sailed from Bristol for New York. Much debate and discussion had been raging for some years as to whether a regular steamship service across the Atlantic was a practicable idea, for the little "Savannah," an auxiliary steam and sailing boat of 350 tons, which had performed the journey in 1819, had taken as long in this passage as the ordinary sailing vessels and had been a deal more costly in the way of coal. The "Great Western" was built by way of experiment and the utmost care was exercised in designing her with a longitudinal strength capable of withstanding the Atlantic waves. She measured 235 ft. in length, was about 60 ft. in the beam, and carried two enormous paddle-boxes, housing wheels 28 ft. in diameter with paddles 10 ft. long; her engines were 450 h.p. But it was not so much the squat, funnelled exterior of the vessel and the details of her sea worthiness that drew crowds to the quayside, as her wonderful interior. "Sofas, couches," writes one visitor, "handsome mahogany tables and other elegant furniture adorn the saloons; the decorations are most profuse and elaborate; while large mirrors multiply all this splendour. The sleeping apartments are so neat, so clean, so comfortable, that their improvement seems almost impossible. When I left the elegant and luxurious cabins and stood before the colossal machinery, my capacity for wonder was exhausted."

Three days before the "Great Western's" departure, a little 700 ton vessel named "Sirius," set out from Cork, also bound for America. In the face of a terrific gale the two rivals threshed their way across the Atlantic, reaching New York on the same day, April the 23rd, after a voyage of fifteen and eighteen days respectively.

New York was all agog with excitement and when, after several days of disappointment, a puff of smoke showed above the horizon, the city ceased work and crowds congregated at the quayside. As the little "Sirius" hove more clearly in sight a great roar of welcome arose, renewed with deafening cheers as, a few hours later, the "Great Western" steamed into the harbour. The Battery saluted with twenty-six guns and as the latter vessel proceeded to her berth she was sur-

rounded with boats full of cheering citizens, enthusiastic at the new link thus forged with the Old World.

Encouraged by the success of their experiment the owners immediately set to work on the "Great Britain," iron built and screw driven, of 3270 tons burthen, which the Prince Consort launched in 1843.

Meanwhile the British and North American Steamship Company, promoted and largely owned by Samuel Cunard of Halifax, Nova Scotia, obtained the Government contract to carry mails between England and America once a week, and in July 1840, their vessel "Britannia" of 1200 tons burthen, left Liverpool for Halifax with passengers and mail-bags. It was on this ship that Dickens and his wife made their first trip to America, January the 13th, 1842, and she has been for ever immortalised in *Martin Chuzzlewit* as the "Screw."

The "Britannia" was the first of the Cunard liners, and in her maiden voyage set up the standard for time-table regularity and precision which that line has always maintained. She was the first transatlantic liner, too, in which the luxury since attained by the Cunard and other lines was approached. The food was excellent: "No matter what be the state of the weather," wrote an early traveller, "the dishes are brought in at the appointed time; and I verily believe that if the ship were sinking, the stewards would still be continuing to serve the dinner. The stewards, in fact, twelve in number, the whole under a *chef*, and dressed in smart blue jackets, are but a variety of the waiter genus, and know only one thing—which is, to supply the wants of the passengers. At eight o'clock in the morning they ring their first bell, which is the signal for rising; and at half-past eight they ring again for breakfast. Irish stew, cold meat, ham, mutton-chops, some kind of fish, eggs, tea, coffee, and hot rolls are placed in profusion on the two upper tables.

"At half-past eleven, the tables are covered to a larger extent, and the bell at twelve o'clock is the signal for lunch. This is a well-attended meal, and there is usually a considerable consumption of soup, cold beef, and roasted potatoes—the latter served with their jackets on, and a great favourite with the more moderate hands. Again the tables are cleared, and so they remain till half-past three o'clock, when they are

covered from end to end in *grande tenue* and the bell for dressing is rung. This bell might as well be spared, for no one makes the slightest preparation; and when the bell at four o'clock is sounded, there is a general rush from the poop, smoking-gallery, and other quarters, into the saloon. The number of passengers during our voyage was a hundred and sixty, and the whole of these, with two or three exceptions, sat down to dinner daily. At the top of each of the eight tables is a silver tureen of soup, and the signal for taking off the lids is the entrance of the captain, who appears in the saloon only at this meal, and takes his seat at the upper end of the first table on the left-hand side."

There is little more to be said about the transatlantic or other steamship lines which were thenceforward rapidly developed to all parts of the world. Some notice must be spared for the "Great Eastern," however, that Leviathan which was born before her time and met so melancholy an end. She was designed by Brunel and Scott-Russell and built at the latter's yards at Millwall, being completed in 1857. She was 680 ft. in length, 83 ft. wide and 32,000 tons displacement—something many times larger than any steamer then afloat—was paddle and screw driven and carried five funnels and six masts. The original idea in building so large a vessel was that she should be able to make the round trip to Australia and back with sufficient coal in her bunkers to suffice for the entire voyage.

At one time there were great doubts as to whether this enormous vessel could be launched, especially as she had been built broadside on to the water's edge. An attempt to get her into the water was made on November 3rd, 1857, but she stuck half way; but after an expenditure of some £120,000, she was eventually floated in the Thames, on January 31, 1858. Crowds went to see this enormous vessel and on Whit-Monday of that year the River was almost blocked with skiffs and row boats. At last she sailed for Weymouth, September the 7th, but on the voyage one of the boilers burst and killed seven men. Repairs had to be made, and it was not until June 17th of the following year that the "Great Eastern" set sail for New York, where she arrived after a voyage of eleven days.

She made a few more voyages to and fro, but, while out-

ward bound on September 9 of the following year (1860), she was caught in a terrific storm, both paddles were carried away bodily, the steering apparatus was lost and such confusion caused below deck that two cows were washed into the ladies' saloon. The boat was a stark, commercial failure and her subsequent history makes rather sad reading. She was employed as a troopship to carry the Guards over to Canada during the threat of war with the Federal States over the "Trent" incident, and was later, after intervals of inaction, employed as a cable layer. When she was broken up in 1888, the cause of her failure, according to sailor superstition, came to light in the discovery of a human skeleton wedged between her inner and outer skins—the body, it was supposed, of a paymaster who had been murdered by the shipwrights while the vessel was being built.

While on the subject of travel mention should be made of the Overland Route to India which aroused considerable enthusiasm and excitement when first inaugurated. Steamers had been plying to India by way of the Cape since 1825, but in 1837 the desirability of expediting the mail service suggested an Overland Route which was immediately organised. Mails and passengers were taken by boat from England to Alexandria, whence they ascended the Nile to Cairo. From Cairo a caravan with camels and donkeys took them across the desert to Suez, where an East India Company's vessel was waiting to tranship them to Bombay. The journey from England thus speeded up, took 56 days, reducing the long route round by the Cape by about a half.

No efforts, indeed, were spared to expedite the incoming mail from India to London. On arrival of the steamer at Marseilles an abstract of the news was telegraphed by semaphore to Paris and thence taken by mail-cart to Boulogne where the envelope was put aboard a steamer, if one was about to sail, or otherwise taken across in a special sailing smack. On approaching Folkestone a signal was made, and a special train was got under steam, carrying the precious mail to London as soon as it was landed. The *Times* and other newspapers, Government and the Stock Exchange, had their own expresses; each dispatch by this expeditious style from Marseilles to London cost some £110 and arrived about two days ahead of the ordinary mail.

On the top of Brixton Hill, and on other high spots throughout the country, there are still inns bearing the sign of the Telegraph. These are relics of the old semaphore telegraph which, before the days of the electric telegraph—until well into the '40s, indeed,—connected London and other towns with the coast. These telegraph stations had two masts, each with four arms. Watson's telegraph, one of the chief signalling establishments, had its head station in the Borough on a shot tower at the end of London Bridge, and messages were sent from there to Forest Hill, thence to Knockholt and so on to Dover. A lamp code was used at nights, but in foggy or very misty weather, whether day or night, the whole system would be put out of action. It is recorded that on one occasion, during the Peninsular War, a message was received in London "Wellington defeated." A cloud then obscured the sending signals and it was not until the next day that very despondent Admiralty officials learned that the real message was "Wellington defeated the French at Badajos."

Wheatstone took out the patent for his electric telegraph in 1837, but it was not until three years later that the new invention was put to commercial use by the Blackwall Railway. It spread to other railways and in ten years' time was in general use. Private messages were sent by the railway companies for many years, and there were also companies such as the London District Telegraph Company which transmitted messages in London at the rate of 6d. for 20 words and undertook their despatch to all parts of England or Europe to which the line had penetrated. It was not until sometime in 1870 that the telegraph monopoly fell into the hands of the Post Office.

CHAPTER XV

COUNTRY LIFE

Social Distinctions — Social Life — Framlingham — Carriages — Prosperous
Tradesmen—Travel to London—Church and Chapel—Principal Citizens—
A Famous Surgeon—Business Men—Teetotalism—Odd Characters—
Parson Gooch—Whitsun Fair—The Theatre—Woodbridge.

A MARKET town in the first half of the 19th century was the metropolis of its district, the capital whence all news was disseminated and where all business was done. Few but the wealthy had ever seen a larger place. It had its own social distinctions, its own laws of etiquette, its own way of life, and save for the coming and going of the London coach, had little actual contact with the larger world. Before the Great Exhibition of 1851 drew so many thousands to London, few inhabitants of even comparatively adjacent county towns had ventured to the capital.

Apart from the particular circles of society in Cathedral cities and fashionable resorts such as Bath or Cheltenham, the society of the English country towns was composed of well-to-do small landowners and professional people, for though the seats of aristocracy were to be found in most counties, the "great folk" were rarely in constant residence and, in any case, had their own circle of intimates.

Social distinctions were as much a matter of Church and Chapel as of profession and trade, for the grocer's son might well become a doctor or the lawyer's daughter marry a farmer, but it was rarely that dissenter and churchgoer came into any close social contact.

Compared with the present days of motors and dancing to wireless jazz, country life of eighty years ago might appear dull to some. But none of those who lived it felt it to be so. Everyone was busy, the men at their professions, at their shops, or out in the fields, the women at home taking a more active part in the house than is the custom now. Jam-

making, baking, brewing, and household sewing took up the greater part of the day. There were visits to the poor of the parish, working parties and a dozen other duties to be performed.

Dinner-parties were almost unknown, for midday dinner was the universal custom; but long social evenings, with music and tea, whist, scandal, and a hot supper to end with, promoted more friendliness than any formal dinner-party could have done. The latest books were read and discussed, newspapers, "Punch," the magazines, were passed from one to the other, local chatter gave a spice to conversation and so the pleasant, candle-lit winter evenings passed, now in one friend's house, now in another. In the long days of Summer there were sketching expeditions, croquet or archery for the girls and their beaux, bowls and fancywork beneath the trees for the elder folk. Often on the still evening air would be borne the music, the shouts and laughter from some neighbouring village fair, or the distant pealing of bells betokening a competition between rival ringers.

In the starlight of the crisp winter nights the hard frosty roads would resound with gigs and coaches rolling back from parties at distant manor houses or from the nearest Assembly, where the girls and boys had been dancing the Caledonians or the Lancers; waltzing, flirting and trying the steps of the new-fangled Polka.

A large collection of notes and first-hand information about the people and ways of a small market town with which I am connected by many ties, personal and family, furnishes me with material for making a sketch of country life in the '40s and '50s.

The East Suffolk market town of Framlingham contained, according to the 1841 census, 2523 inhabitants, practically as many as at the present day, though the rapid increase in population of towns such as Ipswich and Colchester, really means that Framlingham has decreased in importance.

Most of the houses are clustered round the irregular sloping triangle of Market Hill, though there are one or two little winding streets as well—Castle Street, Double Street, Fore Street. At one end of the town stands the ancient castle of the Howards, until quite recently a romantic and picturesque ruin. Separated from the Market Hill by the

old Guild Hall, is the magnificent parish church with its massive flint tower on which the setting sun shines purple, and its splendid chancel, rich with Howard tombs.

The centre of an extensive agricultural district with its acres of waving cornland, the market town of a number of villages, and the shopping centre for the well-to-do farmers and wealthy clergy of many miles around, Framlingham was a prosperous little town. It was not until 1846 that the railway came even so near as Ipswich, some twenty miles away, and at that distance it did more good than harm to trade, for it helped the shopkeepers to get their stuff down from London and at the same time was not accessible enough to draw local buyers out of the place. The old castle brought a certain number of summer visitors; but the prosperity of the town depended upon the flourishing farmers whose fields stretched for miles on either side, and the number of well-to-do people who lived in the town itself.

The pleasant Market Hill, with its shady row of lime trees fringing the raised pavement along one side, was busy with the coming and going of people, the rumble of carts or the smart clatter of hoofs as farmers or squires drove in from neighbouring villages. All the gentry and clergy had their own carriages, usually pair horse-chaises with a postillion dressed in scarlet jacket, leather breeches, polished top-boots and a hat with a cockade. The rector of Dennington, nearby, invariably came into town in a yellow and black coach slung on leather straps driven by a liveried coachman in sky-blue coat and silver buttons, with a footman on the little platform behind. Another rector travelled in his carriage and four, the servants in dark blue liveries with high hats and black and yellow waistcoats. The small landowners, men whose disappearance as a class closed for ever the pleasant comeliness of country life, rode in on horseback while their wives and families came in comfortable country gigs or broughams.

Framlingham society consisted of some fifteen or sixteen middle-class families, most of whom were nearly related to each other while all had intermarried at some time. One such was the Edwards family who, through some generations of weaving, farming and general trading had acquired considerable wealth. Their history in the '20s and '30s shows

how trade merged into the professions, and is typical of what happened in many country families.

Old George Edwards, who died in 1836 in his 84th year, was for many years one of the leading characters in the town. In his high-wheeled yellow gig, driven by a negro servant, he might be met at all times and in all weathers driving to some of his outlying farms or to a neighbouring market. His black man, at once the terror and delight of every small boy in the countryside, was generally supposed to have been a slave whom the old man had purchased and liberated, though, as a matter of fact, he was one of many negroes who drifted into the country during the early 19th century and entered into domestic service.

The son of a successful tanner, George Edwards had enough money to take over the chief shop in Framlingham, where he drove a thriving business in drapery, groceries, wines and spirits. There was also a large trade in candles—at that time the sole means of artificial light in the country. In addition to the actual shop in Framlingham he had managers in many of the small village stores round about. Later on he added a little private bank to the business and advanced money to farmers on the security of their crops.

When he retired, the business was taken over by his two sons, George and Charles, the former soon afterwards taking out his share and launching out into farming and malting. A third son was a lawyer. The third generation of Edwardses—grandsons of George—were all professional men; two were in the Church, four became barristers, three were solicitors in London, four practised in medicine or surgery, and one was a proctor at Doctors' Commons, while such things were.

In this way were the professions and trade mixed up in country life.

Framlingham was, and still is, an out-of-the-way place. The nearest turnpike road was some six miles distant and communication with London was only kept up by means of carriers, and occasional coaches before the coming of the rail. Old Sam Noller, one of the carriers, every week sent a six-horse wagon to London, advertised to carry a somewhat sinister combination of "dead meat and passengers." Two nights and a day were required to do the eighty odd miles, at an average speed of four miles an hour, with innumerable

stoppages. In winter the journey took twenty-four hours longer!

A more expensive way of getting to the Capital was to take post to Wickham Market, some five miles distant, and there catch the fast Yarmouth Coach, the whole trip being done in a long day's journey. In 1838 the landlord of the Crown and Anchor Inn inaugurated a system of "Union" coaches from Framlingham to Ipswich, Halesworth and Norwich, but they did not run for long. On one long-remembered occasion the horses started off without the coachman, whereupon some women on the outside set up such a screaming that the animals took fright and dashed out of the town down a narrow road in which was a dangerous curve over a bridge. Luckily a labourer saw the impending danger, sprang over his garden gate and caught the leaders by the head just in time to save a serious accident, though he himself was seriously injured, and one of the horses had to be killed.

The single railway line from Framlingham to the main line at Campsea Ash, opened in the late '50s, solved the problem of transport and inaugurated a new era in the town's life. For some years, I may add, it was one of the local diversions to assemble at the station and watch the arrival of the evening train.

Though there was no library and no club in the town, well-to-do people kept abreast of the times and had the best books sent down by one of the London libraries, while the local bookseller sent his assistant round the town and outlying villages with the latest number of "Pickwick Papers" or "Nicholas Nickleby," or "Vanity Fair," or Lever's latest rollicking tale.

When the Courts were up or youths from the 'Varsity were down Framlingham was filled with young men and their friends who went riding, shooting, fishing, playing cricket, or skating on the Meres, according to the season of the year, who took their sisters and their sisters' friends for picnics by the sea at Aldeburgh or Dunwich, and danced away the evenings at one or other of the houses in the neighbourhood. There were musical parties, too, slightly more formidable "at homes," conversazioni, as well as evenings devoted to games, debates, or reading aloud.

I have mentioned the hard line drawn between Church and Chapel. All dissenters were not, of course, looked upon with the disfavour earned by the Ranters, a somewhat mysterious sect who horrified Framlingham with their loud voices and lax morals, but "Chapellers" were considered, on the whole, something in the light of kindly, well-meaning cranks, respectable enough—eminently respectable—but not quite the folk one would invite to the house.

Dissent, especially Unitarianism, had a strong hold among the smaller tradesmen and tenant farmers, and they carried out their beliefs with an insistence long since evaporated. There was Miss Elizabeth Barker, for instance, the milliner, who was a staunch Congregationalist and insisted upon her apprentices following her to chapel three times every Sunday. Her brother, Samuel, the watch and clockmaker, was an equally staunch Unitarian and a Liberal and declaimed the most pronounced views to all who entered his shop.

One of the principal men in the better-class society of the town was Mr. Charles Clubbe, the local solicitor and an attorney in the Queen's Bench, a clever lawyer who made a small fortune from this country practice. His partner was Mr. William Edwards, a prominent citizen who took a lively interest in all that concerned the town. It was he who brought about gas lighting, who urged forward the railway projects, who introduced new systems of education for the children of the poor and during many years practically moulded the thought and politics of the town. What those politics were may be gathered from the fact that the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832 was celebrated by a huge tea to all the inhabitants, tables being arranged the whole length of Double Street on each side of the road.

The chief medical man in the place was Mr. William Jeaffreson, a surgeon whose skill and repute extended far beyond the little area of his practice. He was the head of a circle of simple but brilliant practitioners in East Suffolk, men who, in their lonely villages, performed hazardous operations of which the world knew but too little. Jeaffreson was a skilled operator in bladder complaints when lithotomy and lithotrity were but little practised; though he won European reputation as the reviver of ovariectomy, performing an operation of this nature in 1836. On several occasions

his Suffolk colleagues did similar operations in their small practices before it was attempted in London.

Banking was a very simple and almost informal affair. In the first instance, George Edwards, the enterprising shop-keeper, found it to his advantage to accept farmers' money for safe keeping, using it in his business or to make advances on the sale of crops. This branch of his business paid so well that the Norwich banking-house of Gurney was attracted by its possibilities and acquired the business, leaving Edwards in charge as salaried manager. For years the Bank was carried on in connection with the shop and it is characteristic of the comfortable easiness of those times that when Jonathan Hart, who had been a farmer at Wingfield, in the neighbourhood, decided to invest his capital and purchased Edwards's business, he took over the managership of the bank and ran it successfully, without having received any previous training, until well into the '70s.

Education of the young folk lay mostly in the hands of Miss Boulton, a straight-backed, rather fierce old lady whose stock of knowledge extended little beyond Department, the elements of the three R's, and a choice collection of fancy stitches. Older boys went to the school of Mr. Hill, who had inherited the business from his father. He was a staunch Dissenter, a good bass singer and prepared his pupils well for the larger schools of Botesdale, Ipswich or Bury, not only in the rudiments of learning but in a just appreciation of the effects of a birch rod.

Poor children were taught by John Wright—commonly known as Major Wright, from his being bandmaster in the volunteer bands—who managed to eke out his scant income with bookbinding.

Milling and tanning were important industries of Framlingham. The first steam mill was erected in 1853, but as the engine was second-hand when bought, and was badly assembled by incompetent artisans, it was a failure from the first and in a very short time was put up to auction as old iron. It was not until some years later that steam mills were introduced with success and there are now several in the old town.

When the tectotal movement spread over England, Framlingham was brought into it largely through the influence of James Larner, the principal clothier and a prominent



Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in the early 30's



Italian Opera House (His Majesty's), Haymarket



Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, burned in 1856

SOME FAMOUS LONDON THEATRES

(From drawings by T. H. Shepherd)

Wesleyan. He was, in his way, a remarkable man. An ardent pacifist and philanthropist he brought down to his house many famous men who must have looked with wonder at the quiet, little Suffolk town. Elihu Burritt, the learned American blacksmith, philanthropist and linguist, who is said to have known 50 languages and organised the first international peace congress; Father Gavazzi, the fiery renegade Barnabite monk, who fought with Garibaldi in the streets of Palermo and amazed the simple dissenters of Framlingham by florid denunciations of alcohol, Tories and the Catholic Church; Edmund Fry, Burritt's associate in the Peace Society; Henry Vincent, the eloquent lecturer and liberal politician; these among others visited Larner and encouraged him in the establishment of the Framlingham Temperance Society. Not that it was concluded without considerable opposition! On one occasion a meeting was being held on the Market Hill, attended by all the leading local lights and several well-known lecturers from afar, when a shouting mob appeared on the scene, led by a burly yokel named Chandler who was armed with a bag of nuts and a police rattle. Jephtha Wightman, one of the local brewers was suspected of having instigated the demonstration, and under Chandler's command they soon put the teetotallers to rout, pelting them with nuts and rotten eggs and drowning their expostulation with the clack of the rattle.

The brewing interest was, in fact, strong in Framlingham as in many other small country towns. Beer was drunk much more commonly than is now the case and the trade was entirely in the hands of local brewers. The business in Framlingham was so extensive indeed that a party of dragoons was always stationed in the town to assist the Excise Officer in repressing smuggling and a company of militia was frequently quartered upon the innkeepers.

Many of the brewers were prosperous men. One of them, named Keer, owned no fewer than twenty public-houses in the town and neighbouring villages. George Brooke Keer was, in his way, a character. He built a house on the Market Hill named the Mansion House, with an iron palisaded front, a pillared portico, a spacious entrance hall, drawing-room, two dining-rooms, a study or library, eight bedrooms, six attics, laundry, kitchen, capacious cellars and, at the back,

an extensive and well laid-out garden. He kept his own coopers to make barrels for his liquor, had a large farm and was one of the wealthiest men of the place.

One of his tenants, it may be mentioned, was a certain Richard Lay, town barber, who papered the walls of his shop with posting bills, circus bills, placards of all descriptions and a few curious pictures, one of which represented Absalom hanging by his hair from the bough of an oak tree, with the legend :

“ Oh Absalom, my son, my son,
Hadst thou had thy periwig on
Thou wouldst not have been undone.”

Mr. Lay, by the way, was famous in the town for never wearing a hat, summer or winter, wet or fine.

Mention of this barber recalls one or two other characters who gave a certain colour to the town. There was, for instance, John Kerridge the butcher, a powerful man of 6 ft. 2 in., whose prodigious strength was the talk of the neighbourhood. He had been known to carry a waggon on his back, and used to amaze his friends by writing their names on a wall at arm's length with a four-stone butcher's weight hanging from the little finger of his hand. He had a good voice and was a great man for a song, one of his favourite boasts being that he could sit down with a mug of beer and sing two hundred songs at a stretch. His butcher's cart bore the following inscription :

“ My name is John and Kerridge too ;
I kill beef, veal and pork and lamb,
My native place is Framlingham.”

Another curious character was a publican named Wells, who usually appeared on Market Hill in a chaise drawn by four donkeys. On one occasion he lost his licence after quarrelling with Mr. Shafto, one of the local magistrates. When his application for renewal came up, Mr. Shafto persuaded his colleagues on the bench to refuse it and then turned to Wells with the remark, “ You see, I'm your master after all ! ”

Among the successful artisans of the town was Samuel Hart, coachbuilder and wheelwright, who brought out an

invention for making carriage springs of wooden laths in order to circumvent the heavy duty then imposed on steel. Then, there was Old Tom Thrower, the tinsmith, who led the singing at the Wesleyan chapel and was firmly persuaded that he was heir to an estate at Hoxne, in which belief he died in the workhouse infirmary ! Nor must I forget Sam Taylor, ironmonger and watchmaker, who had a wonderful fascination over dogs and would walk about the town with curs of all degree yapping at his heels.

This is the place, too, to mention Parson Gooch, who lived in a little cottage in Framlingham though vicar of the neighbouring parishes of Brundish and Bedfield, in neither of which was a parsonage. He used to ride to his churches on a grey pony and would follow the hounds on the same steed, being very fond of hunting. Parson Gooch had a great objection to changing his linen, and when his shirt was too dirty to be respectable would cover its deficiencies by wearing another on top of it ; sometimes having as many as eight shirts on his back. When the weight of all these garments became insupportable he would have a stripping day and start afresh.

He carried his eccentricities into the pulpit. On one occasion he chose as his text : " A little while and ye shall see Me, and yet a little while and ye shall not see Me," and the rustic congregation were flabbergasted when Parson suited action to the word and dropped out of sight on the floor of the pulpit ! A city parson who happened to be in the neighbourhood once observed that the Brundish congregation was very small in comparison with those who went to chapel. " That doesn't matter," said Parson Gooch, heartily. " The pay is sure and certain."

The Whitsun Fair at Framlingham attracted villagers from all the neighbourhood. Market Hill was crowded with booths and stalls arranged in narrow streets or avenues. Samuel's, Richardson's and Starr's shows ; Wombwell's Circus ; waxworks and sparring booths furnished endless delight to young and old. There would be seen " poor old mad Harvey," from Wilby, nearby, working his roundabout with horses and boats, and inveigling lads and lassies with : " Who'll ride ; who'll toss ; who'll ride a wooden hoss ? " Nearby stood Will Hearn, selling fried sausages and pints of beer to an alarming extent. A little way off was old Gibbs,

the blind fiddler, singing ballads while his wife peddled songs by the yard among the audience. Not far distant might be found Joe Middleton, selling a queer assortment of black puddings and ointment. The weekly market, every Saturday was then, as now, a purely business affair and brought in many a hundred pounds to shops and inns.

Framlingham in those days had a theatre, for which an old malting had been adapted. There was a proper stage and wings, boxes for the "nobility and gentry" a pit, and seats at the side in lieu of a gallery. The orchestra, just below the footlights, consisted of a string band, a clarionet and a curious, bass, brass instrument known as a serpent. A certain Fred Atkinson was manager, and though he occasionally put on Shakespearean pieces his own talents shone more in comic character songs. Attired in a dressing-gown surmounted by a nightcap and holding a lighted candle in a flat candlestick, he invariably brought the house down in "My Grandfather was a wonderful man." A Mr. Copping led the orchestra; Miss Copping, his daughter, was the leading lady; Miss Desborough, the *première danseuse*, made a tremendous sensation in the Highland Fling; Mr. Manns shook the boards with the Hornpipe, and Monsieur Perrault, a Frenchman, was juvenile lead or comic foreigner as the pieces demanded; Mr. Mimms was heavy lead and augmented his salary by cutting names on tombstones.

Music was taught by Mr. Zebedee Tydeman and his wife, and pupils came from all parts of East Suffolk to take lessons from the couple in singing or playing. They gave excellent concerts, too, and on one memorable occasion, got up an oratorio in the church accompanied on the organ by Sir George Smart, the eminent composer mentioned by Ingoldsby:

"The same Sir George Smart, O!
Who played the consarto
With his four-and-twenty fiddlers all in a row."

For those who wanted a little more excitement there was always plenty of life to be found in the neighbouring town of Woodbridge which was a garrison town in those days and enjoyed all the liveliness associated with the redcoats. Many retired officers lived there with their families, and the society of the place was alert and full of go. There were subscription

balls every month throughout the year, concerts for which the best talent was procured, a really excellent library and a card club. The theatre, too, was the best in Suffolk and its actors were men and women of culture.

The little market town I have attempted to describe so briefly was but one of hundreds and had its replica in every shire of England. Its old social life is practically extinct now, killed by railways, altered conditions and the replacement of the gentlemen landowners by working farmers who neither by birth, inclination nor manners can compare with their leisured, cultured and sociable predecessors.

CHAPTER XVI

THE STORY OF FORTY YEARS

Reform Bill—Railways—Queen Victoria—Chartism—The Royal Marriage—Attempts on the Queen—The Royal Family—Improvements—Papal Aggression—Death of Wellington—Crimean War—Indian Mutiny—The Atlantic Cable—England in Arms—Friction with America—Theodore of Abyssinia.

THIS has no pretension to be a history book, but it would be impossible to conclude it without a brief and very condensed narrative of what took place during the period.

William the Fourth came to the throne on the death of his brother George IV., on June 26, 1830. The country was then in the throes of a great agitation for Parliamentary Reform. The distribution of seats and the qualifications for voting were such that millions of citizens had no word in the government of their country. A handful of ignorant voters in some decayed hamlet like Old Sarum would return two members, while great industrial centres such as Birmingham and Manchester were unrepresented. Country electors sold their votes for a few shillings, or voted according to the orders of the great men of the neighbourhood, and by means of these pocket boroughs, as they were called, the House of Commons was packed with members who thought as much of the interests of their patrons as of the needs of the country.

It was the French Revolution of July 1830, which drove Charles X. from his throne, that brought the Reform agitation to fever heat in England. The new king, William, who was a good deal more astute than many of his subjects imagined, favoured the idea and realised that reform was in any case a necessity, but the Duke of Wellington, at that time Prime Minister, strenuously opposed it and refused all concessions. But public opinion was not to be flouted with impunity, the Duke was driven from office and the Whigs, under Earl Grey, brought in a Reform Bill which disfranchised 56 boroughs, made other radical alterations in voting qualifications, and

gave representation to 42 new boroughs. It met with extraordinary antagonism in the Lords and not until the King threatened to create enough peers to swamp opposition was the Reform Bill passed, June the 4th, 1832.

On September the 15th, of the year of the King's accession, a significant event was the opening of the Liverpool to Manchester Railway. Although not actually the first line in England, it was this railway that demonstrated the value of steam locomotives and finally dissipated all ideas of other modes of traction. The opening ceremony was unhappily clouded by disaster, for as William Huskisson, a former president of the Board of Trade was crossing the rails to speak to the Duke of Wellington, he was knocked down by a train and so severely injured that he died from the necessary amputation of his leg a few days later.

In July 1834, Lord Melbourne became Prime Minister and, except for a few months, held office for seven years, his government during that time effecting many important changes in the country.

Slavery was abolished in 1834; the commercial monopoly of the East India Company was done away with about the same time; a beneficent Poor Law was introduced in the same year and the next year saw the Municipal Corporations Act, which regulated and restored the self-government of the corporate boroughs of England; and in 1836 the Civil Marriages Act redressed one of the greatest grievances of Dissenters.

For all his bluff joviality William IV. was not loved by his people and no shadow of regret was felt when he died on June 20, 1837, all hearts and minds turning to the girl princess who ascended the throne. Her youth and freshness formed a pleasing contrast to the blasé old men people had grown accustomed to associate with Royalty and her honest desire to serve her subjects and reign constitutionally was a novelty after the selfishness and pigheadedness of the last three sovereigns. No monarch ever started a reign with better wishes from her people than did Victoria, and, as over sixty long years were to prove, no monarch did more to deserve those wishes.

The year after the Queen's accession trouble began to brew in the form of Chartism. The London Working Men's Association issued what they called the People's Charter

containing six demands which, at that time, were thought revolutionary, though all but one have long since been laws of the land. These demands were the abolition of the property qualification for M.P.'s; their payment; vote by ballot; manhood suffrage; equal electoral districts; and annual Parliaments. A petition bearing 1,000,000 genuine signatures was presented to Parliament and ignored. In South Wales riots followed which were not put down without bloodshed. Excitement died down, however, and in spite of the noisy leadership of Feargus O'Connor, the movement seemed quiescent until the European revolutions of 1848 encouraged O'Connor to renew his agitation. Meetings were held throughout the country, many fierce threats against society were uttered by windy orators, a colossal petition was prepared and arrangements were made for a massed meeting of the agitators on Kennington Common whence they were to carry their petition, by violence if necessary, to the Speaker's table.

All London was alarmed, special constables were enrolled by thousands—among others Louis Bonaparte, later Napoleon III.—and the military defences of the metropolis were confided to Wellington. But the whole affair was on par with most of O'Connor's Irish bombast. Only 30,000 Chartists made an appearance at Kennington; O'Connor was terrified at the bare notion of coming to grips with the military; and the monster petition was eventually taken to Westminster in three cabs. Upon examination the 5,000,000 alleged signatures were found to number about 2,000,000 of which tens of thousands were obvious forgeries, such as "Victoria Rex," "Duke of Wellington," "Pug-Nose," "Hookey Walker," "No Cheese." Amid the laughter caused by this exposure Chartism vanished from serious politics.

The Queen was crowned on June the 28th, 1839, amid the utmost enthusiasm. In addition to the sumptuous Society entertainments there were illuminations in Green Park and Hyde Park and a four days' fair in the latter to which all London resorted. Shows and booths of every kind occupied a third of the Park; one portion was set aside exclusively for gingerbread booths, elsewhere Bob Williams, the famous boiled beef seller of Old Bailey, had a much patronised tent. There were fat boys and living skeletons, monstrosities of all

kinds and shapes, wild beast and performing fleas ; boats on the Serpentine, and dancing on the green.

When she came to the throne Victoria found the Whigs in power and as she had been brought up as a child in Whig principles she gladly surrounded herself with ladies of the party. Public discontent began to grow when it was seen that the Queen was kept under very jealous surveillance by the Whigs and allowed to see no person whose views clashed with their own.

In May 1839, however, the government was defeated and Sir Robert Peel, the Tory, had to be summoned. He formed his cabinet and was ready to take office when the Queen resolutely refused to dismiss her Whig ladies of the bedchamber and accept those nominated by the new prime minister. She remained deaf to all argument and Peel was obliged to retire worsted, allowing Melbourne to return to power. This "Bedchamber Plot," combined with a scandalous piece of injustice done to Lady Flora Hastings, made the Queen so unpopular that she was hissed on her appearance at Ascot Races. It was obviously high time for her to get married and taken out from the clique of Whig ladies who made a hedge round her.

The Queen married her first cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg on February the 10th, 1840. Justice is only now being done to that much misjudged man who devoted his whole life to the service of his adopted nation, and, undeterred by sneers, open dislike, and frigid civility, laboured day and night as his wife's counsellor, amanuensis and friend.

Those early years of the Queen's reign were full of gaiety. Once again the world seemed young and Society heaved a sigh of relief as the stolid, depressing, vicious atmosphere of the Hanoverian court gave place to the youth and freshness of Victorian London. Fancy-dress balls, state visits to the theatre, private theatricals, jaunts and jollities of all sorts were the order of the day, and if the young Queen was extravagant it was forgiven her readily by those who had been quick to complain of money wasted on the gross and showy luxuries of her uncles.

On the 10th of June, four months after her marriage, the Queen was driving up Constitution Hill when a mad pot-boy, named Edward Oxford, fired a pistol at her twice. Neither

shot touched her and with remarkable coolness she drove straight to her mother to announce her safety. Two years later a similar attempt, and in the same place, was made by John Francis, a youth of twenty who was transported for life. This was on May the 30th; a few weeks later, July the 10th, a pistol was presented at the Queen as she drove along the Mall, by John Bean, a half-witted, deformed lad who had charged his weapon with nothing more lethal than a little powder, a scrap of paper and broken pieces of pipe-stem.

The Queen's first baby, the Princess Royal, was born in November 1840, and a year later public rejoicing signalled the birth of an heir to the throne, whose christening took place with due pomp at Windsor on the 25th of January following, the infant being named Albert Edward. For the next few years happy events of a similar nature occurred with appropriate regularity. Princess Alice was born on April 25, 1843; the following year saw the arrival of Prince Alfred; in 1846 it was Princess Helena and two years later Princess Louise. Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, was born on May Day, 1850; three years afterwards came Prince Leopold and the last addition to the nursery was Princess Beatrice, born in 1857.

The Queen and Prince Albert, who was not officially given the title of Prince Consort until 1857, made a first visit to Scotland in the August of 1842, and visited the Highlands where so many happy months of later years were to be spent. In 1843 they paid a state visit to Louis Philippe at Eu, receiving a return visit the following year.

The high price of bread and the increasing feeling in favour of Free Trade demanded the attention of Government during the early years of the reign. In 1839 the Anti-Corn Law League was formed to agitate for the repeal of those laws which forbade the importation of foreign grain, at a price lower than that fetched by home-grown wheat. Various remedies were experimented with to improve the situation but a potato famine in Ireland forced the hand of Sir Robert Peel, the prime minister in 1846, and the obnoxious laws were repealed.

The condition of the poor during the early '40s—the Hungry Forties—was terrible. Food was dear, work was scarce, the prisons and workhouses were full, and there seemed



The Volunteer Movement took England by storm in 1860. It was caused by the bombastic threats of invasion uttered by a few foolish French colonels and eagerly reported in the more sensational Paris papers. Rifle corps were established in all parts of the country, regular sergeants being lent by the War Office to drill and train the thousands of recruits

RIFLE CORPS PRACTICE IN WESTMINSTER HALL

no prospect of better times coming. In 1842 it was reckoned that one person in every eleven was a pauper, and one person in every five hundred was committed for trial on some count or another. The introduction of steam and machinery into factories had the temporary effect of throwing thousands of men out of work and it was not until the cheap goods produced by the new methods had extended our markets and stimulated a demand that labour was again required extensively.

Writing in 1842 about Colne, Lancashire, Dr. W. Cooke Taylor, a well-known local magistrate observed :

"I visited eighty-three dwellings, selected at hazard ; they were destitute of furniture, save old boxes for tables, and stools, or even large stones, for chairs ; the beds were composed of straw and shavings, sometimes with torn pieces of carpet, or packing canvas for a covering, and sometimes without any kind of covering whatever. The food was oatmeal and water for breakfast ; flour and water, with a little skimmed milk, for dinner ; oatmeal and water again, for a third supply, with those who went through the form of eating three meals a day. From the excellent clergyman of the town I learned, that out of a population of 53,000, no less than 13,000 were receiving parish relief ; that the poor-rates had risen from 3s. to 10s. in the pound ; that the relief granted was deemed by the paupers so inadequate to their wants, that the relieving officer in one district was obliged to be protected by a military guard ; and that the general ruin was fast absorbing the shopkeepers of Colne and the dairy farmers in the neighbourhood. I went into several of the shops ; the same tale was told by all ; they saw nothing before them but bankruptcy and ruin."

The repeal of the Corn Laws, the extension of railways and the work thus entailed, and emigration to the colonies and America eventually brought affairs to a normal state again, though not until riots and much discontent had taken place.

A huge impetus to trade had been given by the introduction of Penny Postage in 1840 and during the next ten years the nation set itself steadily to building up its commerce and strengthening its markets. The increasing network of railways over the country not only facilitated trade in every direction but gave employment to armies of labourers. The

electric telegraph was slowly coming into use, and with all these new facilities England entered upon a new lease of life. There were disasters, such as the Railway Mania of 1844-46 which culminated in a financial crisis that practically paralysed the City, but, on the whole, business flourished and commerce extended. The year 1842 saw the birth of that bug-bear of modern life, the Income Tax, introduced as a temporary measure; and the modest fourpence in the pound occasioned more grumbling than is now heard when the same number of shillings is extorted from us.

In 1838 a suspicion of Russia's intentions with regard to India led to action against the Afghans who were in treaty with the Czar. Kabul was occupied and for two years British power was paramount. But three years later the Afghans revolted and our troops were forced to retreat. They were attacked while passing through the Khyber Pass and totally annihilated, only one survivor reaching home to tell the story. The next year General Pollock advanced victoriously into Kabul and wiped out this affront to our national honour; but the prestige of Britain's power had been shaken and a few years later the Sikh War broke out.

Sir Hugh Gough, Commander-in-Chief in India, carried out a laborious campaign against the Sikhs and in three great battles, Moodkee, Ferozeshah and Sobraon (1845 and 1846) broke their power. But two years later fresh trouble arose and the whole Punjaub revolted. Somewhat tardily Gough moved against the enemy and despite a long and sanguinary battle at Chillianwallah (Jan. 13, 1849) failed to break their resistance. Sir Charles Napier was then sent out to supersede him and crushed the revolt after a victorious battle at Gujerat. On March the 29th the whole of the Punjaub was annexed.

Great excitement was caused in England by the discovery of gold in California in 1849 and numbers hastened out there to make fortunes. The discovery of the precious metal in Australia in 1851, gave yet another fillip to emigration, and although the gold lure died down, the opportunities and possibilities of the young colonies steadily induced shipload after shipload of pioneers to quit the old country.

It is difficult to picture the storm of indignation that swept over England towards the end of 1850 at what was termed "The Papal Aggression." On September the 30th, Pope

Pius IX. created Doctor Wiseman Vicar Apostolic of the London district, and Archbishop of Westminster, giving him a Cardinal's hat. This was followed by the parcelling out of England into a number of dioceses. The whole affair was purely a matter of ecclesiastical organisation calculated to assist the government of Catholics in England, but the Protestant susceptibilities of the country resented what was considered a monstrous usurpation of the Queen's power and dignity. Excitable churchmen and Nonconformists smelled in anticipation the fires of *autos-da-fé*, "the Inquisition," "Jesuits" and "Bloody Mary" were subjects of common talk, and the fury of ignorant bigotry was fanned by the premier, Lord John Russell, whose letter to the Bishop of Durham spoke bombastically of "the laborious endeavours which are now making to confine the intellect and enslave the soul." This was of course mere catch-vote humbug on the part of Russell, but it was just what the people wanted and in three months over 6700 addresses were sent to the Queen urging her to resist the Popish hordes and assuring her of the staunch loyalty of her subjects to the stake itself. Russell introduced his Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, as useless a piece of legislation as it was meaningless, and public sentiment died down.

I have described the glories of the Great Exhibition of 1851 elsewhere. For a few years afterwards the country was busy with internal development, though the steady rise to power of Louis Napoleon, before and after his *coup d'état* at the end of 1852, kept all eyes fixed watchfully on France. On September 14th of that year the whole nation was plunged into mourning for the death of the Duke of Wellington, the most distinguished, if not the ablest man of his day. His opposition to reform of any sort had long since robbed him of the affection of the nation at large, but his death recalled past glories, the last 35 years were forgotten, and it was the coffin of the hero of Waterloo rather than that of the unpopular statesman, that called forth the reverent grief of thousands as it was borne through the streets to St. Paul's Cathedral.

And then, as though the long peace which England primarily owed to Wellington was to finish with his death, in 1854 the Crimean War broke out. To the majority of Englishmen the causes were as obscure as the causes of war

usually are, but what it really amounted to was that England and France felt it their policy to protect Turkey against the onslaught of mighty Russia. Public enthusiasm immediately rose to fever heat and hatred of Russia became the passion of the moment. On September the 14th, the Allied army of 24,000 English, 22,000 French, and 8,000 Turks landed on the Crimea and a week later defeated the Russians at the battle of the Alma. Then came the battle of Balaclava, with its ever memorable charge of the Light Brigade, and in November the Russians attacked us and were defeated at Inkerman.

Winter followed, terrible in its cold but rendered even worse for our troops by the wholly inadequate measures taken for their commissariat and for dealing with the sick and wounded. The untiring efforts of Florence Nightingale and her friends were quite insufficient to remedy the evil, but they called attention to the disgraceful state of affairs at home and the Government fell.

Public resentment was roused to the highest pitch and hints of treachery were soon in circulation and found ready credence. The Prince Consort and even the Queen were suspected of being in league with Russia, and at one time popular rumour even declared that the Prince had been sent to the Tower. As a doggerel ballad of the day put it :

“ The Turkish War, both near and far
Has played the very deuce then,
And little AL, the royal pal,
They say has turned a Russian.

“ When AL came here, you’re all aware
He brought with him no riches,
He’d scarce a rag upon his back
And great holes in his breeches.”

Palmerston succeeded Lord Aberdeen as Prime Minister and under his able guidance matters were improved at the Front, though there was always confusion and jealousy between the French and English commands. Matters became worse after the death, in June, of Lord Raglan, the Commander-in-Chief, and it was not until Sebastopol had been closely besieged for nearly six months that the Allies entered

the place. The war virtually ended with this ; no one was benefited, and something like 600,000 lives had been lost !

The Crimean War had one effect, however, and that was to encourage the natives of India to revolt against a power they saw so indifferently successful in feats of arms. Many causes have been assigned for the Mutiny which broke out at Meerut on May the 10th, 1857, but its true origin will probably never be known. Undoubtedly, fears that Britain intended to break caste laws by the introduction of greased cartridges had something to do with bringing discontent to a head, but there were deeper causes for the fearful and bloody outburst which swept over Hindustan that year. From Meerut the mutineers marched to Delhi which they seized and proclaimed capital of the Mogul Empire. Then followed a series of appalling massacres and horrors. Women and children were slaughtered—or worse—in cold blood, numberless deeds of demoniacal malice were committed and all England was plunged into desperation at the tales of terror that came by each succeeding mail. Cawnpore, Lucknow, Delhi—the whole of England rang with the names of these places and shuddered at the fate of the helpless wives and innocent children who fell victims to Sepoy rage and lust. Energetic measures were taken; Lawrence, Havelock, Outram, Campbell, all soldiers of resource and bravery were hurried out at the head of fresh troops and by the autumn of 1858 the bloody revolt was at an end. On September the 1st the government of India was transferred from the East India Company to the Crown and Lord Canning, Governor General, became the first Viceroy.

It was in 1858 that the electric cable was successfully carried across the Atlantic and inaugurated by messages exchanged between the Queen and President Buchanan. But after twenty-five days something went wrong with the insulation, communication broke down and not until 1865 was another cable laid, by the “Great Eastern,” that huge vessel born before its time. After many disheartening accidents communication was finally and for ever established between the two worlds.

The attempted assassination of Napoleon III. by Felice Orsini, in 1859, had a remarkable and unexpected result in England. Orsini had hatched his plot while living in London

and the Paris papers waxed hot with indignation against us for affording refuge to blackguards and cut-throats of all nations. In the excess of their zeal they went so far as to utter contemptuous threats of invasion. Instantly, the whole of this country seethed with excitement and in an incredibly short time Volunteer Rifle Corps were formed wherever a few men could assemble to drill. Night after night Westminster Hall, the Parks, every open space were thronged with men of all classes, drilling, manœuvring and training themselves in deadly earnest to repel the foreign invader :

“The wind shall bear across the sea
The burden of our earnest song.
Who, hearing, doubts we will be free?
Who, knowing this, dare do us wrong?
Step together, all together,
Each man's true beside us.
Close together, fall together,
Death only, can divide us.”

Such was the origin of the Volunteer movement of 1859-60 which from that day took a firm hold of the nation. For a couple of years the enthusiasm kept at its height, and the Rifle Volunteers were heroes of poems, and theme of songs, giving a name as the custom was to every conceivable object.

The '60s were eminently peaceful in England, though in 1862 we were nearly dragged into the conflict then raging in North America between the Federal and Confederate armies. Two commissioners from the Confederate States were travelling to Europe in the “Trent,” a British vessel, when a Federal warship stopped her, removed the commissioners with their secretaries, and sent the vessel on her way. The most passionate resentment was aroused in England at this exceedingly illegal and cavalier proceeding, and as the Federal Government refused to acknowledge themselves in the wrong, the diplomatic notes grew increasingly acrimonious and all England anticipated war. In three weeks more than 11,000 troops were despatched to Canada in readiness for a campaign, but a diplomatic opening was found which enabled the Federals to climb down more or less gracefully and the crisis passed.

While the “Trent” excitement was at its height the nation was amazed and shocked to hear that the Prince Consort lay

dying. His illness had been so short that few outside Royal and Ministerial circles even knew that he was unwell. But on the morning of Saturday, December 14th, a significant bulletin was issued apprising the nation of what to expect, and that same night, at a quarter to eleven, the Prince died. For years after her widowhood the Queen was rarely seen and but little heard of. She paid every attention to affairs of the State but resolutely refused to appear in public except to unveil some of the innumerable monuments erected to the Prince Consort by patriotic communities in all parts of the country.

In the spring of 1863 London went wild with enthusiasm in its reception of the Prince of Wales's charming bride, Alexandra, and society welcomed her arrival in the hope that she would do something to mitigate the gloom cast by the Queen's seclusion.

In 1867 Theodore of Abyssinia, conceiving himself slighted by the British Government, proceeded to assert his dignity by imprisoning a number of British subjects in the fortress of Magdala. Sir Robert Napier was despatched with an expedition to bring him to reason and after a very strenuous and skilfully conducted advance, forced his way into Magdala. Just within the city gate lay Theodore who had preferred death by his own hand to capture by his enemies.

This was the last event to strike the popular imagination in the period which I have designated the Days of Dickens.

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